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The Original Blow-Dried Journalists

Hollywood vs. Manhattan
Joel Kotkin, Ben Stein

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OLD AND NEW MEDIA

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March/April 1996 Volume 7, Number 2

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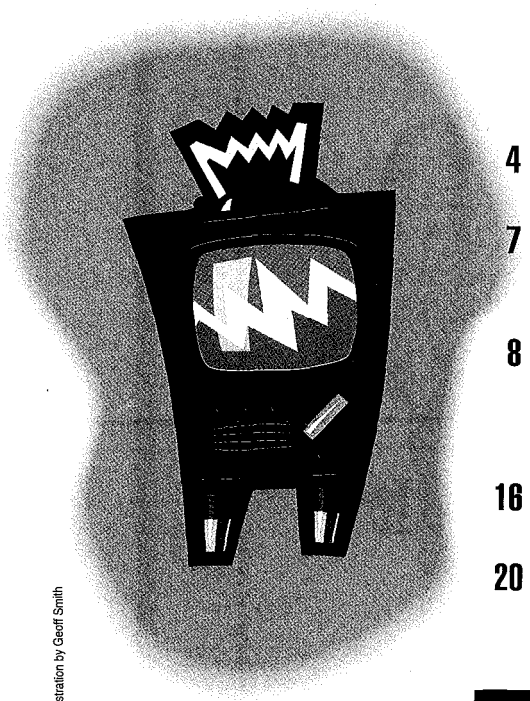
A NATIONAL MAGAZINE OF POLITICS, BUSINESS, AND CULTURE

MARCH/APRIL 1996 VOL. 7, NO. 2



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A National Magazine of Politics, Business, and Culture

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Bird's Eye

Karl Zinsmeister

Mixed Media

This issue of *The American Enterprise* covers the media—broadly defined to include everything from newspapers to the Internet—and does so in competing voices. We have arguments against partisan reporting, and others for it; defenses of populism in the press, along with warnings against that; appreciations of the new computer media, but also skepticism. Our feature section opens with an examination of perhaps the most "disreputable" of all branches of the media: talk radio. Educated elites tend to look down on talk radio, and the establishment press rags mercilessly on its youthful news and information step-sister. Too vulgar, visceral, rabble-rousing—and popular—for comfort.

The critics of talk radio, however, are wrong. As the openest of our media exchanges, talk radio provides by far the most realistic portrait of the thought and opinion of the American people. Admittedly, realistic portraits are not always an inspiration—as Mark Twain once politely put it, "there is a great deal of human nature in people." But for any but the worst snob and misanthrope, the fact that talk radio looks a lot like the real America has to count in its favor.

I myself have found talk radio's informational standards to be quite high. As a guest on many shows over the last five years, I've been consistently impressed with the quality of the audience, the quality of most hosts, and the sophistication of the discourse. Not long ago, for instance, I was invited on G. Gordon Liddy's show to explain problems in federal programs that pay benefits to disabled people. The conversation was remarkably high-toned, and the level of understanding from both host and callers (on both sides of the issue) was frankly better than I usually get when reporters for major newspapers phone me. Afterwards, we received 661 requests for a sample of our magazine. These are people who are serious about ideas. To take another example, one month ago I was on the air in Denver talking about incomes when the host gave his audience an excellent explanation of Purchasing Power Parities (an important but complicated economic concept used to compare standards of living in different countries).

We're not talking here about discussions of "women who love too much," but rather about ambitious conversations on important, difficult topics. Trusting average citizens and involving them with national affairs in this way is a truly American undertaking. Remember James Madison's idea of who should make the great choices in our land: *"Not the rich, more than the poor; not the learned, more than the ignorant; not the haughty heirs of distinguished names, more than the humble sons of obscure and unpropitious fortune. The electors are to be the great body of the people."* The goal of our national institutions, Madison urged, ought to be to "refine and enlarge the public views." Talk radio operates very much in this tradition.

Talk radio also meshes naturally with the longstanding cultural and democratic traditions of our country. "An American does not know how to converse, but he argues," wrote Tocqueville in the 1830s. He continued: "Democracy does not provide a people with the most skillful of governments, but it does that which the most skillful government often cannot do: it spreads throughout the body social a restless activity, superabundant force, and energy never found elsewhere." Try to imagine talk radio in Europe and this idea that the medium is quintessentially and authentically American will not seem silly at all.

This question of populism versus elitism comes up again in Joel Kotkin's article on page 39. Beginning as a story about competition between New York and Los Angeles for the entertainment business, the piece develops the idea that Los Angeles is a more natural center

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for the production of American mass culture because it has a fairly Midwestern ethic and a whatever-works-for-the-people standard of success, while Manhattan is dominated by a Eurocentric and elitist view of the creative arts. Obviously there are problems associated with both Hollywood's crassness and New York's snobbery, but Kotkin concludes that if the center of gravity of America's entertainment industry shifted from West Coast to East, the warped, nihilistic elements in today's popular culture that conservatives hate would grow even more pronounced.

Reflecting on this interesting tussle between a vulgar Sodom and a haughty Gomorrah (with a heartbreaking amount of artistry and technical skill being devoted to tawdry ends in both places), one of your editors could only think of G.K. Chesterton's remark upon first seeing Broadway at night in the 1920s. Staring at the gorgeous glitter of lights, shapes, and colors, and noting that most of it was nothing more than advertising for "pork to pianos," G.K. commented to his guides: "What a glorious garden of wonders this would be, to anyone who was lucky enough to be unable to read." (Could this explain the popularity of American films overseas?) One wonders what Chesterton would have thought of the Internet—where years of brilliant effort have yielded an even more glittery Broadway—whose single most popular use so far is.....the transmission of girly pictures!

After populism versus elitism, the next pair of ideas in tension in this issue is objectivity versus partisanship in reporting. Of course, conservatives have railed against the enduring left-wing bias of the mainstream media for years, and the problem is surely worse now than it has ever been. In our "Pit Bulls" and "December with the Media" boxes in SCAN we provide just a few fragments of the kind of media output that regularly turns conservative ears red.

What is new in the last decade is that it isn't just conservatives anymore who are ticked off at the media. *Most* Americans are now deeply annoyed. This shows up in informal opinion (as in this joke: "I know someone who recently applied for a job at a newspaper. One of the first questions on the application was, *'You have the choice of saving a drowning man or getting a prize-winning photograph. What type of film would you use?'").* It also shows up in hard, scientific evidence: In surveys of public regard and trust, reporters have recently tumbled down to the lowly depths occupied by politicians, used-car salesmen, and lawyers.

The relentlessly liberal-only culture of the major media is one cause of this public disillusionment. Michael Barone, himself one of America's most distinguished journalists, argues on page 29 that the absence of non-liberal perspectives in newsrooms today makes for reporting that is boring, inaccurate, and out of step with views across America. It is leading many citizens, he says, to abandon the mainstream media for other sources of news. Barone suggests that the best way to counteract this is to hire different kinds of people as journalists, openly admit that the press is partisan, and then start offering a fairer range of perspectives in print and over the airwaves.

Lynne Cheney and Robert Lichter worry that our problem has become bigger than simple media bias. It isn't just that liberal reporters are letting their own opinions color their work. Worse, argue Cheney and Lichter in separate books expanding on their articles here, practitioners of the new journalism have absorbed the "deconstructionist" dogmas that dominate today's universities. The result is that many reporters now live by Nietzsche's rule that "there are no facts, only interpretations."

Taking a different tack from Barone, they suggest that partisanship is inappropriate in the press, and that the public needs to demand more objectivity from its reporters, starting with less editorializing. Recently, Lichter and Cheney document, the amount of facts and quotations in the press has tumbled sharply, while the amount of airtime and column inches used by reporters to provide their own "analysis" has soared. This manipulative approach, they argue, can and should be abandoned.

Yet another place where we argue with ourselves in this magazine is our Internet articles. Will the end result of the geography-obliterating connections offered by widespread computer networking be a centralized, homogenized world where all the advantages go to big organizations and conforming individuals? Or is the real problem with our computer networks the opposite: too much openness, too much democracy, too few standards, to the point where the material flowing through the pipeline has so much dirt mixed in with the diamonds as to make the process of tapping in often a waste of time? If you're interested in the Internet, be sure to see the articles by Frederick Turner, Douglas Gomery, and Stephen Bates.

If some of the material in this issue of *The American Enterprise* seems conflicting, even contradictory at times, it isn't because your editors have become wishy-washy. More like, to borrow a $64 academic term, *dialectical.* Related but opposing tendencies like populism and elitism, partisanship and objectivity, centralization and decentralization often rise together, feeding and fending off each other—with great leaps of problem-solving innovation resulting from the tension between the divergent impulses. This is the basis of the whole American system, which is built, in both its political and economic realms, on the idea that good things grow out of "strife and harsh competition," to use the words of constitutional scholar Robert Goldwin. Ours is "not a design for calm and harmony in national life," he notes. "It is a design for a stormy, tumultuous, and chaotic peace." And America's competitive, checked and balanced "confusion, turmoil, and ferment" has proven tremendously productive.

The "dialectical" arguments you are about to read are not really "stormy." No fistfights break out. There is, however, lots of backing and forthing: See George Will (TRANSCRIPT) versus Irving Kristol (pages 12 and 27) on populism in American history. Overlap what Kotkin says about the Americanness of Hollywood with Ben Stein's take immediately following. Mix what Barone has to say about media bias with what Cheney, Lichter, and Brent Bozell present a few pages later. None of these arguments cancels each other; most are actually complementary. But like two bean tendrils that reach higher and higher by spiraling around one another, it is the opposing pressure of one stalk of argument against the other that allows the twisted strand to rise magically above the earth.

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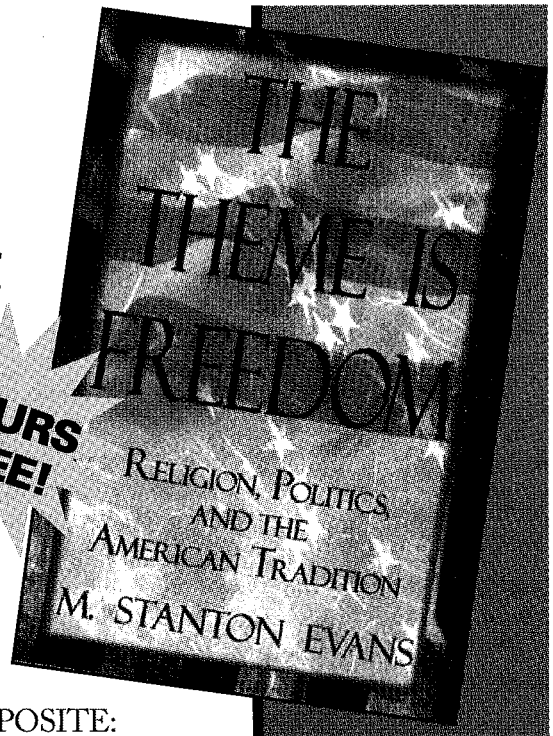

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- ★ Why the Declaration of Independence and the French "Declaration of the Rights of Man" are not the ideological "twins" of liberal mythology, but radically opposed

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—Samuel Francis, *Washington Times*

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Sidelights

The English Heritage Society granted rock guitarist **Jimi Hendrix**'s home a *Hendrix lived here* plaque next door to **George Frederick Handel**'s. · · · Rapper **Warren McGlone**, aka "Steady B," was charged with killing a policewoman during a bank robbery. ❧ "Someone who tunes in 'The McLaughlin Group' to get a better grip on the future would do just as well to flip a coin," concludes a study of predictions made on the TV show conducted by the *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*. · · · *New York Times*' Washington bureau chief **R.W. Apple** says, "I'm afraid some of our best journalists in Washington take themselves even more seriously than the politicians they write about, which is a hell of an accomplishment." · · · Federal Election Commission records show major figures in the TV, movie, and newspaper industries donated five times as often, and six times as much money, to Democrats as to Republicans during 1993-4, *MediaWatch* reports. · · · They Don't Get No Respect: Analyzing two Gallup polls from 1985 and '95, **Stephen Hess** of the Brookings Institution finds that negative views of the news media have grown considerably among all groups of Americans. Local TV news comes off fairly well, but the big loser is "the network television evening news broadcasts anchored by **Peter Jennings**, **Dan Rather**, and **Tom Brokaw**." · · · When **Kingsley Amis** died, his *New York Times* obituary credited him with Joseph Conrad's novel *Lord Jim,* rather than his novel *Lucky Jim,* bringing to mind Amis's claim that "Laziness has become the chief characteristic of journalism, displacing incompetence." ❧ Computer entrepreneur **Steven Jobs** told *Wired* that he's helped give away "more computer equipment to schools than anybody else on the planet" but now realizes "what's wrong with education cannot be fixed with technology," because the problem lies with teachers unions and "bureaucracy." The "best thing we could ever do is go to the full voucher system." · · · Only 16 percent of U.S. small businesses have access to the Internet, a Pitney Bowes study reports. · · · Sen. **Larry Craig** (R-Idaho) answers 5 percent of his constituent mail via the Internet and says that "number is growing daily." · · · The **Rush Limbaugh** No Boundaries [Neck] Tie site on the Internet had 2 million attempts and 500,000 "hits" in the first ten hours after Rush mentioned it on the radio.

The U.S. Postal Service has purchased numerous ads to promote elections by mail, prompting an exasperated critic to comment, "Using taxpayer money to promote the undermining of democracy in order to fortify an obsolete government agency must be a first of some sort." ❧ Shortly after blaming sugar workers for a poor harvest, Cuban President **Fidel Castro** complained that Cubans taking advantage of recent permissions to be self-employed are earning more than state employees. His solution: progressive personal income taxes. · · · An advocacy group for the poor is suing California, saying the state's minimum wage is so high it violates the group's right to engage in political advocacy: The wage would force the group "to hire fewer workers," while those hired "will be less sympathetic" and thus "less effective advocates" because of their own high wages. ❧ The liberal National Council of Churches and the conservative Christian Coalition have formed the National Coalition Against Legalized Gambling. · · · The Commerce Department announced that public radio stations whose programs include a religious element will no longer be barred from the agency's grants. ❧ Famed Harvard professor **Stephen Jay Gould** cancelled a recent class so he could attend "a traditional socialist rally." Earlier, he required students to attend class on the Columbus Day holiday. "**Columbus** is vastly overrated anyway," he explained. · · · The Natural Law Party, born of **Maharishi Mahesh Yogi**'s TM movement, has nominated for U.S. President Dr. **John Hagelin**, a Harvard-trained physicist and former Republican; his running mate is also a Harvard graduate. ❧ Germany's pacifist-enviro Green Party passed an unprecedented provision that approves of "lightly armed" German troops being sent to Bosnia. · · · A former Reagan State Department official says, "The Bosnian intervention is a species of liberal international social engineering. Will it turn out like [**LBJ**'s] Great Society?" ❧ Criticizing the movie *Nixon,* **Garry Wills** writes that director **Oliver Stone** "has displaced onto **Nixon** a whole set of problems that were more properly **Kennedy**'s." · · · Actor **James Woods** says working on a movie with Stone is "like being caught in a Cuisinart with a madman." ❧ **Lamar Alexander** says he's running for President "because the real issue is the breakdown of personal responsibility, and the real answer is to turn off the TV sets and learn to expect less from Washington and more from ourselves." · · · *USA Today* calls this "the gayest TV season in memory," but **Kenneth Cole**, screenplay professor at California's Mount San Antonio College, says homosexual themes "don't get the best ratings"; so it's hard to see "why they do it." · · · A Fox TV executive says the network isn't anti-family, but "if family values means premarital sex is a bad thing, then we may not have a show that represents that." · · · Only three of the ten highest-grossing movies of 1995 were R-rated.

A local pizza parlor told the *Washington Times* that when President **Clinton** leaves town, White House orders decrease by 10 percent but tipping increases 15 percent. —*SW*

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SCAN

SNAILS ON A PEDESTAL

In his last book, Richard Nixon commented on the Environmental Protection Agency that he established: "As often happens with government programs, the pendulum has swung too far. Measures designed to protect the endangered species such as bears, wolves, and the bald eagle are now being used to force Idaho farmers off their land for the sake of the thumbnail-size Bruneau Hot Springs snail."

The battle between Bruneau snails and Idaho farmers occurred along the Snake River. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service ordered 59 farms and ranches, representing over half the area's economy, to be cut off from their water supply to avoid lowering the snails' water level.

For a government agency to destroy an area's economy like that, some fish or bug must be declared to be different from every other fish or bug, and therefore special, endangered, and protected, like the spotted owl. Oregon is home to a vast abundance of owls, but because the spotted owl has a special little white spot on its lower feathers it has complete veto power over any consideration of 30,000 logging jobs or the price of two-by-fours and new homes.

Lucky for the Bruneau snail, it has its own special, endangered characteristic. "It can be distinguished from other snails," reports the *Wall Street Journal,* "only because of the relative largeness of its sex organ." Pretend for a minute. Imagine being out all day on your tractor in the blazing sun, a third-generation Idaho farmer working the same land as your pioneer forebears, worrying about the drought and the price of fertilizer and taxes, and up comes a federal agent to tell you to hang it all up because he's found a snail with an unusually large sex organ in the nearby creek.

Snails also killed Brandt Child's plans to build on 500 acres he purchased in Utah. Federal inspectors found thumbnail-sized Kanab ambersnails in a lake on Child's property. Ambersnails are slightly more gold colored than non-ambersnails. Child is out $2.5 million.

In Texas, Roger Krueger can't build on his $53,000 retirement lot because a golden-cheeked warbler was spotted in "adjacent canyons." Yshmael Garcia, on the other hand, did gain permission to build a home in Riverside, California. Unfortunately, the house went up in flames in a brushfire after Garcia was denied permission to clear the brush—a protected rat habitat—around his home.

Near Bakersfield, California, more than two dozen federal and state agents, accompanied by helicopters, descended on the farm of Taiwanese immigrant Taung Ming-Lin. The agents arrested Ming-Lin, levied fines of $300,000, and confiscated his tractor as a murder weapon. He was charged with running over a Tipton kangaroo rat during plowing.

New York Times columnist Anthony Lewis recently predicted a "significant public backlash" if Congress stops "listing further endangered species." Perhaps Lewis has spent too much time in Manhattan. A "significant public backlash" against crazy rules and overblown government elected the current Congress. If Mr. Lewis wants to see more names on an endangered species list, he should start with jobless loggers, farmers, and ranchers, and strained taxpayers and consumers.

*—**Ralph R. Reiland** teaches economics at Robert Morris College in Pittsburgh.*

THESE PIT BULLS ARE DEFINITELY NOT BIASED

"It's one of the great political myths, about press bias.... Most reporters don't know whether they're Republican or Democrat...." *Dan Rather, 1995*

"Despite her soaring popularity and role as queen of the Democratic party, she was ousted from office in the nation's sweep to the right. Today, more than half a year since her surprising defeat, she remains as popular as ever..."

NBC "Today" host Giselle Fernandez, in a 1995 profile of Texas Gov. Ann Richards, who was "so popular" she lost her re-election bid

"A lot has been written about you... Much of it has a sense that Mario Cuomo is a man full of promise... The promise that you may have been able to deliver to people, your eloquence, your intelligence... Will you continue to use this passion, will you continue to use this eloquence?"

CBS "This Morning" host Harry Smith questioning Mario Cuomo after New Yorkers asked him to take his promise elsewhere.

"You've reduced the deficit. You've created jobs... You've got a crime bill with your assault weapon ban in it. You got NAFTA, you got GATT, and 50 percent of the people don't want you to run again. Where's the disconnect there?... In our poll today, the absolute critical items for Congress to address: Number one, cutting the deficit. Number two, health care reform. The two issues which were absolute priorities for two years, and you don't get any credit for them?"

Peter Jennings, 1995 interview with President Clinton, "World News Tonight"

"It's very nice, of course, if we have a president we like. But there's more to governing than likability. We learned that from the likable Ronald Reagan, who charmed us with stories as he amassed huge deficits and spent billions on goofy defense plans. No, the record is more important. And Bill Clinton's record is just short of terrific."

Former NBC News president Michael Gartner in a 1995 USA Today article

(Quotations courtesy of the Media Research Center)

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GAS FROM THE AUDUBON SOCIETY

"A Refuge Is No Place for Oil Rigs!" scream flyers from the Audubon Society opposing oil drilling in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). This is an interesting position, considering the Audubon Society's own practices.

In a recent issue of "PERC Reports," environmental researchers Pamela Snyder and Jane S. Shaw note that "Since the early 1950s, 37 wells have pumped natural gas and some oil from Audubon's Paul J. Rainey Sanctuary, a 26,000 acre preserve in Louisiana. These wells have produced over $25 million for the Society." Conditions in the original deed forbade the Society from using the gift as anything but a wildlife sanctuary. But when valuable energy resources were discovered on adjoining land, Snyder and Shaw report, Audubon went back to the original donor's widow to ask her to allow drilling. She agreed.

The authors note that "Audubon's experience at Rainey clearly demonstrates the feasibility of extracting natural gas without causing environmental harm. The refuge serves as a resting and feeding ground for over 100,000 migrating snow geese. It is home to ducks, wading birds, deer, shrimp, crab, and fish."

"The apparent inconsistency between Audubon's policy on ANWR and its actions on Rainey has embarrassed Audubon officials," Snyder and Shaw report. But they suggest that rather than feeling hypocritical for earning $25 million from mineral resources on their own land while opposing similar efforts on public land, the group should embrace its own experience as a model. "Rainey needn't be an embarrassment to the Audubon Society. It should be a flagship."

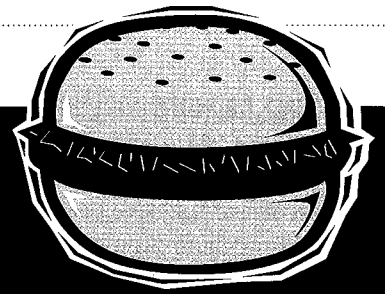
FLATTENED BY CONFUSING TAXES

With Steve Forbes having demonstrated its public appeal, opponents of a simple flat tax are now bringing out the long knives. It's "truly nutty" says Lamar Alexander. Nothing in it for anyone but the rich, say many Democrats.

Recently, Steve Mariotti—who runs non-profit programs in inner-cities around the country that teach young people entrepreneurial skills in the hope they will start their own legitimate small businesses—testified before the National Commission on Economic Growth and Tax Reform. His remarks suggest the constituency for a flat tax may be broader than the critics imagine: "We put special emphasis on making the business legal…and we try to familiarize our students with basic federal tax forms, stressing the importance of complying with all applicable taxes.… However, the number-one obstacle to potential economic development of our low-income communities is the present tax code, which is so complex and confusing that we could spend virtually all of our 80-hour entrepreneurship program teaching tax compliance. A related and equally troublesome problem is the morass of small-business licensing regulations and permits that engulfs anyone trying to start an honest business on a shoestring—especially in our large cities.

"The result is that our students often feel alienated, intimidated, and hopeless. They can see very clearly that for people who already have money, confusing paperwork and regulations are no problem. They hire accountants and lawyers to deal with them. But for an inner-city resident without the luxury of spare cash, three days lost in dealing with a bureaucracy or having to pay a seemingly modest fee of, say, $300 to a CPA, can make the difference between cutting through red tape or buying groceries for the week.…

"These same young people can see that illegal business, drugs first and foremost, provides quick cash and no paperwork at all. The temptation is great to drop out into the underground economy.… In short, the tax code and other small-business regulations basically have the counterproductive effect of reducing the tax base instead of increasing it.… We should design a simple way to make our social contract work through a flat tax and simplified annual filing."



KEEPING BOSNIANS SLIM

Paul and Linda McCartney wanted to help suffering Bosnians. Being vegetarians, they shipped in some "healthy, low-fat" veggie burgers made out of soybeans. After the delicacies had been sent, nutritionists discovered they actually had a fat content of 20 to 23 percent. Linda was "very upset" and said she would recall the burgers. As we go to press, no figures are available on how many Bosnian aid recipients have a fat problem today.

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JAPAN'S TIME-CAPSULE SOCIALISM

A new book called *The 1940 System* is making waves in Japan. Written by Tokyo economics professor Yukio Noguchi, it argues that the heavy bureaucratic management that weighs on Japan's economy today is not a product of deep cultural traditions, as is often claimed, but rather a wartime import built on European fascist ideas. Prior to the militarization of Japan's economy, Noguchi finds, the country practiced a form of capitalism close to what now prevails in Western markets.

During the mobilization of the 1930s and '40s, Japanese consumers, savers, workers, and employers got used to yielding freedoms and choices to the state in return for promises of job security and national glory. And after the war, planning bureaucrats in Japan's government overlaid the economic mechanisms they had borrowed from the fascists with other measures copied from the American New Deal. "Their thinking was often very socialist," says Noguchi. He suggests the American military men who oversaw Japan as occupiers were willing to leave much of Japan's war-footing economic system in place because it made it easier for them to run things from the center.

Accustomed as they now are to heavy government controls, the Japanese may have difficulty adjusting to freer forms of economic and social organization, Noguchi worries. But at least, he hopes, his findings may begin to convince his countrymen that there is nothing natural or inevitable about the system of managed economics that is currently failing them.

RENT-CONTROL WONDERLAND

What city would you guess has the world's highest real estate rents? Tokyo? Hong Kong? New York? Try Bombay.

That's right. Center-city rents in Bombay currently average $146 per square foot per year. That is higher than Tokyo ($144), midtown New York ($39), or any other spot on the planet.

There is one simple explanation for this: Bombay is the world capital of government rent control and government controls on land development. India's Rent Control Act makes it virtually impossible for a landlord to evict a tenant or raise his monthly payments. The *Wall Street Journal* describes a typical case where an apartment in central New Delhi was rented almost 50 years ago by the current owner's grandfather, for about 50 cents a month. The descendants of the original tenant still live there, and they still pay the same rent.

Landlords deprived of the chance to charge reasonable rents to tenants protected by rent control must make up for lost revenue by charging all other tenants astronomical rates.

In addition to its rent control law, India has the Urban Land Ceiling and Regulation Act, which strictly limits the amount of development builders can place on their lots. The paradoxical result: Lots of rundown property and vacant buildings, killingly high housing and office costs, and illegal squatters who get no services and make no payments.

But at least Indians are protected from the injustices of unbridled private markets.

KICK-A-BOOMER

Media coverage of the first baby boomers hitting the half-century mark was rather unsentimental. "In the 50 years since the first boomer uttered the first wail, the wailing has never stopped," observed Christopher Hitchens (b. 1949) in *Vanity Fair* and on television. "Self-regarding and superficial egomaniacs looking for esteem in all the wrong places," he summarized. In the *Washington Post,* a letter-writer from the post-boomer generation complained that "today's youth has been raised by the youth of the '60s, those radical, peace-loving, warm-hearted, intelligent, and socially active hippies who, in the '80s, got too busy snorting blow and playing Wall Street to raise their children. So they got divorced and bought us things to make up for it."

PBS AND NPR ARE ALREADY PRIVATE

Defenders of government-subsidized culture often say that privatization would kill public broadcasting. Actually, PBS and NPR are *already* private, not-for-profit corporations under section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Service code. As each entity likes to boast, only a small part of its funding comes from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which is financed by annual congressional appropriations.

Privatization, then, is not a terror stalking PBS and NPR; these entities are already roughly as private as Pat Robertson's Christian Broadcasting Network. The only question is whether PBS and NPR should continue getting the public subsidies that currently account for about a fifth of their budgets.

PBS and NPR are hardly lacking other financing options. They already enjoy heavy 'corporate sponsorship' from companies like Mobil, General Electric, and Amgen (who are really just advertising the way they would on any other network). Only one regularly scheduled PBS series has no sponsors, and that is "Frontline," the documentary program that has been plagued with

DECEMBER WITH OUR NATIONAL MEDIA

From Red-tailed Dove to Bosnian Hawk

I think Vietnam was a paper tiger that we were fighting over there. I think [Bosnia] is more justified."

Newsweek contributor Eleanor Clift, "McLaughlin Group," December 2.

Merry X-mas from NPR

The evaporation of four million people who believe this crap [the Second Coming of Christ and passage to heaven and hell] would leave the world an instantly better place."

National Public Radio commentator Andrei Codrescu, "All Things Considered," December 19.

Beyond Pathetic

The shutdown now has a human face. Joe Skattleberry and his wife Lisa both work for the government. Both have been furloughed. They can't afford a Christmas tree."

ABC reporter Jack Smith, "World News Tonight," December 22 (the fifth day of the government shutdown).

(Quotations courtesy of the Media Research Center)

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charges of left-wing bias and shoddy journalism since it went on the air in the 1980s.

Public broadcasters also receive foundation grants, listener donations, licensing income, and other funds. Last year, Children's Television Workshop, the producers of "Sesame Street," netted $120 million on gross sales of approximately $1 billion. "Barney" is in about the same league. PBS has a marketing agreement with Turner Broadcasting for home video versions of programs like Ken Burns' "Baseball" and "The Civil War." Recently, PBS President Ervin Duggan announced a $75 million joint venture with the Reader's Digest Association to sponsor television programs. These networks are not fragile flowers doomed to die off in the absence of government subsidies.

When public TV stations screamed during their spring 1995 pledge drives that congressional 'extremists' were going to cut off their funds, viewer contributions increased in the range of 15 to 40 percent over the previous year. Summer fund-raising enjoyed similar success. Public broadcasting can surely survive without its government pork, particularly if it is valued by the public as much as advocates insist.

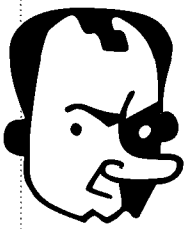
Realistically, ending taxpayer subsidies for PBS and NPR is likely to mean more "Masterpiece Theatre," "Think Tank," "Sesame Street," and Metropolitan Opera broadcasts, and a bit less leftish haranguing, quasi-pornography, and other offenses to the average American.

All in all, not a bad market solution.

*—**Laurence Jarvik** is cultural studies fellow at the Capital Research Center.*

IT COULD BE WORSE

On pages 55-57, Tom West describes how our federal government interferes with free speech in troubling ways via media regulation. In Europe, home of the nanny state, government mandates extend even further. A law just taking effect in France sets quotas for the amount of French vs. non-French music that radio stations are allowed to broadcast. It also requires that every second French song must come from some artist who has never had a hit. "We're forcing listeners to listen to music they don't want to hear," says the programming director at one of Paris's major stations. Or maybe not. Compact-disc sellers are expected to do well under the new regime.



STONING HISTORY

Former Nixon White House aide Charles Colson says of Oliver Stone's recently released film *Nixon,* "It is a grotesque distortion both of Mr. Nixon and more importantly of the American system in general.... This is not merely historical revisionism. It is deconstructionism applied to American democracy. Mr. Stone's free play of facts and fantasy is employed to fashion his own private, politicized vision of America's history."

One horrid example of Stone's myth-making is his insertion into the film of the entirely fictional Texas businessman character Jack Jones (portrayed by actor Larry Hagman). Together with some Mafia-backed Cubans, Jones confers with Nixon before President Kennedy's visit to Dallas in 1963. They talk about Nixon running for President in 1964—because something could happen to Kennedy to take him out of the election. Nixon is seen leaving Dallas as the city is preparing to welcome Kennedy. In reality, Nixon was in New York the day of the assassination.

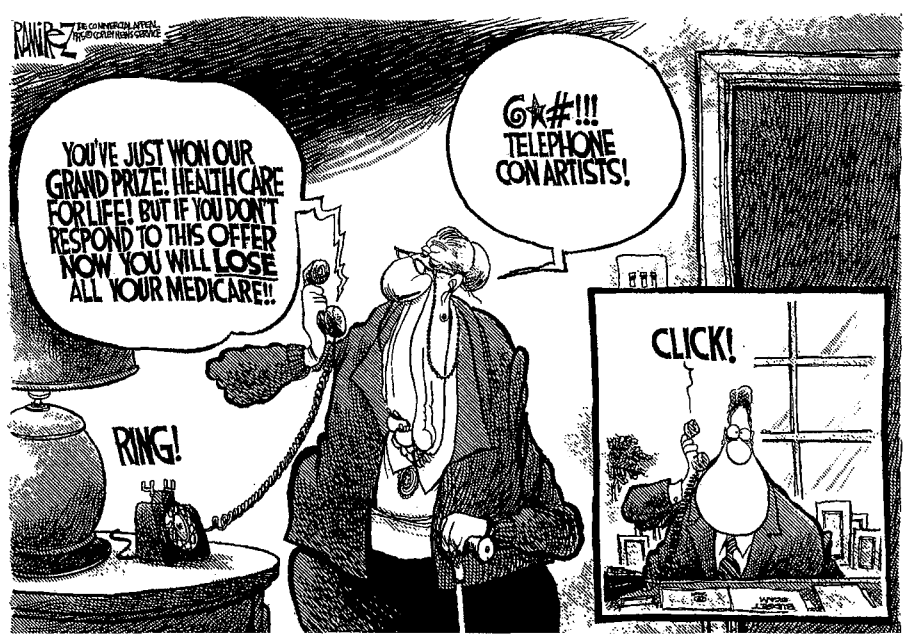
Another phony scene shows Nixon discussing President Eisenhower's order to murder Castro. The film Nixon says he was the leader of a group working out the details of the murder, a group which continued operations after he left office. Stone suggests Kennedy was murdered in retaliation for Nixon's activity.

If this money-losing, 3½ hour, $43 million-dollar phantasm were being seen as failed entertainment only, there would be no great reason for concern. But the frightening thing about *Nixon* is that, like Stone's *JFK,* it is being pushed into school curricula. Both Warner Brothers (the studio behind *JFK)* and Disney's Hollywood Pictures (which made *Nixon)* have published companion books and study guides for teachers and students who want to use the films in high school American history classes.

My friends who are teachers tell me that many more films are being used in classrooms these days, because that is a way to keep Generation-X students cooperative and well-behaved while still ladling some educational content into them. Keep in mind that for many young Americans who see *Nixon,* that will become their single most detailed mental image of the events in U.S. history there depicted. There will be no irony in Stone's portrayal, because there will be nothing truer for it to ricochet off of.

Should we expect that Jack Jones will soon be as "real" a part of American history for many citizens as Jonas Salk or Benedict Arnold?

*—Southern California writer **Dave Geisler** writes often on the movies for* TAE.



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THOSE SENSITIVE DRUG DEALERS

A book reviewer weeps for drug dealers made uneasy by the working world: **"The profits these low-level dealers gain from their crack trade are so meager—they average about $9 an hour, or twice the minimum wage—and the dealers' desire to join the mainstream is so strong that they often seek other, legitimate employment. Some of the most touching and instructive scenes are those in which Primo works in the mail room of a downtown company, 'scrambling in the basement of the corporate world,' as Bourgois writes. The macho Primo rankles at being told what to do by a woman. When he tries to show initiative by answering phones, he is admonished because the company doesn't want customers to be greeted by his Puerto Rican accent. When Primo realizes that his clothes, his swagger, his every move make him look like an idiotic buffoon in the eyes of the downtown Anglos, the hurt is palpable.'"**

Greg Donaldson, reviewing Philippe Bourgois' *In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio* (*Washington Post*, 12/28/95).

OUR UNPOPULIST PRESS

In his new book *Neoconservatism: The Autobiography of an Idea,* Irving Kristol argues that our national media simply don't understand populism, and so contemporary conservatism puzzles them: "American democracy regularly witnesses populist upsurges.... They are built into the very structure of American politics in a way that is alien to British or European politics, where 'politics' is what the government says or does. In a sense, it is fair to say that contemporary political journalism as well as most political scholarship is 'statist' in its preconceptions and vision. Whenever a populist upsurge occurs, as is happening today, national politics in the United States trails behind local politics, and to focus one's attention on Washington is to misdirect it."

But state and local politics are for the most part considered unworthy of attention by the national media. "Indeed, our liberal media really detests our entire federal system, which complicates their journalistic mission. They don't mind presidential primaries or primaries for governships, which fit into their framework of politics-as-a-horse-race. But they hate primaries for lower offices—that's 'local news' and unworthy of their attention. Referenda—a legacy of the Progressive movement that is institutionalized in many of our states—are now equally despised because they introduce a 'wild card' into the established political 'game,' and because these days they are more successfully used by conservative activists."

EDUCATIONAL MEDIA

Funny how the media manage to "educate" Americans on some things, but not on others. For instance, two-thirds of Americans in a new *Washington Post* poll know that Republicans favor "making greater reductions in the rate of growth of Medicare and Medicaid spending" than Democrats do. That, of course, is the one fact that Democrats are most eager today for the electorate to contemplate.

By contrast, only half as many people know who the Senate Majority Leader is (Bob Dole). And when the same people are asked whether the federal government spends more on Medicare or on foreign aid, they say foreign aid by a margin of two to one. Way off. In fact, Medicare costs taxpayers over ten times what foreign aid does.

Why is it that the sort of perspective which would help voters understand why Republicans are trying to rein in mushrooming Medicare costs somehow hasn't been conveyed to the public? Strange that certain facts, and not others, end up planted in the national mind.

BLACK HISTORY AND 'INTERNAL FIRE'

African-American columnist Robert Steinback suggests that the greatest difficulty for the black community today is "our inability to reignite the internal fires that carried us through centuries of hardship far worse than anything we now face." Those internal fires, he laments, have been "replaced by internalized victimhood." As the nation celebrates Black History Month this February, it is worth remembering that anyone, regardless of race or ethnicity, who believes that the forces outside of himself are greater than the forces within is thinking like a victim.

Nowhere is this more evident than in our schools. That some black children deliberately underachieve today has been well documented by researchers. As a public school teacher with nine years experience, I have seen this phenomenon firsthand and know that it is far more prevalent today than it was a decade ago.

W.E.B Du Bois, co-founder of the NAACP, argued that there is no justification for black resignation: "How any human being, whose wonderful fortune it is to live in the twentieth century should...despair of life is almost unbelievable. And if...that person is (as I am) of Negro lineage, with all the hopes and yearnings of hundreds of millions of human souls dependent in some degree on her striving, then her bitterness amounts to a crime. Every time a colored person neglects an opportunity, it makes it more difficult for others of the race to get such."

This sense of larger responsibility for individual actions once stoked the "internal fires" motivating black excellence. "The black American hero used to be the dedicated, hard-working family man; the strong, focused woman who exceeded all expectations; the individual who answered hatred and discrimination with confidence and determination. The victim who refused to think like a victim," writes Steinback. Now, he mourns, "too often, black Americans who expound such ideas are dismissed as part of a sold-out, middle-class elite that has lost touch with its blackness.... It is time to blow this nonsense out of the water."

One of the clearest lessons of black history is that communal encouragements to achievement, as well as communal sanctions against unproductive behavior, are needed to overcome cultural disadvantage. Encouraging black youths to respect academic accomplishment, discarding the victim mentality, and shunning those who celebrate anti-achievement would be a good start toward rekindling the "internal fires."

—1988 Stafford County, Virginia Teacher of the Year ***Cheri Pierson Yecke*** *is a doctoral candidate at the University of Virginia.*

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YOU MAY BE THE LUCKY WINNER OF A BALLOT!

On December 5, Oregon held the nation's first-ever vote-by-mail election for a federal office, settling the Democratic and Republican nominations to replace Bob Packwood. Not that anyone might have noticed. Yes, at 57 percent turnout was higher than in past primaries, but there was eerily little drama to the contest. About 90 percent of the ballots had already been turned in before "election day."

Our household's ballots arrived sandwiched between three credit-card offers, two magazine renewal offers, and a sweepstakes entry. It's hard to take seriously the Oregon Secretary of State's warnings about ballot integrity when the ballot arrives alongside an envelope announcing that "You have already won an electric knife set!" Casting our votes had all the majesty of, well, answering the rest of the mail.

"Do you want *Sunset* again this year?"

"Yeah."

"Oh, here, you have to sign your ballot envelope."

Oops, there goes an election-law violation. State law says mail-in ballots have to be filled out by the person whose name is on the envelope. Somehow, though, I doubt our household was alone in having a designated ballot card-puncher.

Since ballots are cast over a two-week period, the candidates can't wage the usual duels of 30-second commercials and mass mailings, building to an exciting crescendo of good old-fashioned mudslinging in the final days. With vote-by-mail, the campaigns can obtain daily updates from county election officials on who has voted and who hasn't, and they tailor their mailings and phone-banks accordingly.

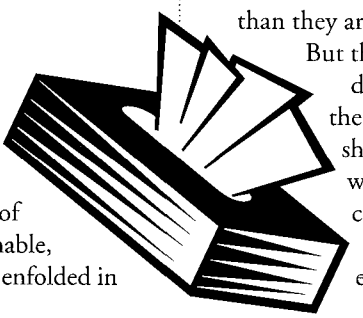
I assume our ballots arrived intact, since we received no last-minute phone calls or mailings from the candidates. Maybe I should have checked, though. In September, I sent a letter from Beaverton, where I live, to downtown Portland, a distance of 12.2 miles on my car's odometer going the long way. Total elapsed mailing time: 29 days. No kidding. For really important local letters I use fax or FedEx. Our ballots didn't seem that important.

Yet the local keepers of Official Opinion have declared vote-by-mail a raging success. There were no confirmed reports of "voting parties" held by unions or other special interest groups, or other fraud. Turnout was up. It cost local governments less money. No one had to stir himself off his rusty-dusty and away from the remote control in order to vote. Whoopee. I can hardly wait for the vote-by-mail presidential primary coming to our mailboxes in March. Maybe Oregon could be still more progressive and do away with the formalities altogether, hiring a polling firm to conduct the election with an efficient, scientific sample of "likely voters."

Secretary of State Phil Keisling, the starry-eyed *Washington Monthly* alumnus who is the driving force behind vote-by-mail, says that extending this boring, demeaning practice to next year's state and congressional primaries is a "no brainer." I couldn't have picked a better description myself.

*—**Tom Holt** is a writer and public affairs consultant in Beaverton, Oregon.*

LIFE WITHOUT MOTHER



Commenting recently on the budget- and entitlement-trimming debate, syndicated columnist Linda Bowles sounded a warning: "Tens of millions of unweaned, perhaps unweanable, Americans are comfortably enfolded in the sheltering arms of government maternalism. They have organized their lives around the belief that it is the responsibility of government to provide them with jobs, food, child care, fat-free popcorn, transportation, a college education, condoms, housing, Kleenex, health services, sexual validation, and heating oil. They have effectively turned over themselves, their children, and their aged parents to the loving control of bureaucrats."

She went on to note that "Welfarism is a bad habit—one that is hard to kick. Poland just elected an 'ex' communist as president. More and more Russians speak with nostalgia about the good old days. Other socialist countries from Sweden to Canada have run out of money but are having trouble convincing the citizenry that change is imperative. Greed, selfishness, and a lack of personal discipline are triumphing over concern for the well-being and happiness of tomorrow's children."

Habits are very different in the land of the free and the home of the brave than they are in Poland or Canada. But the welfarism virus is indeed a pervading one. By the turn of the century we should have an idea whether America will become an exception to the twentieth-century disease, or its biggest victim.

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THE EVOLUTION OF WILLIAM WELD

In the past, Massachusetts Republican Governor William Weld, a pronounced liberal on social issues, has referred to himself as "to the right of Attila the Hun" on fiscal matters. But in his latest State of the State address he showed that on economics too he has moved decidedly to Attila's left. The reason this matters to people other than just Bay Staters is because Weld has announced he is running against incumbent Democrat John Kerry this year for the U.S. Senate.

Weld's speech announced plans to pump millions of new state tax dollars into day care, education, and worker training. He still sounds the fiscally conservative trumpet with a promise to reduce the state income tax rate by close to ten percent, but he knows this proposal is not likely to pass the three-to-one Democratic state legislature.

There can be no mistaking the evolution of Bill Weld. In 1990, candidate Weld said he could cut the state budget by a billion dollars. Instead, it has risen by 20 percent, from $14 billion to $17 billion.

There is virtually no difference between Weld and Kerry on most social issues. Both have cemented their positions on the left: pro-affirmative action, pro-abortion, pro-environmentalism, pro-gay-rights, pro-gun control, and in favor of government-supported midnight basketball.

Weld plans to target Kerry's opposition to the death penalty and his support for billions of dollars of tax increases over the past 12 years. The governor's assets include declining unemployment rates, keeping his pledge of "no new taxes," and high personal popularity. Kerry, in turn, will brandish photos of Weld and Newt Gingrich arm-in-arm. Anticipating this, Weld has recently pointed out his differences with Gingrich.

And then there's the money. Neither man is poor, but Weld's single-digit millions of personal wealth pale beside the $760 million Kerry recently acquired through his marriage to Teresa Heinz, widow of former Pennsylvania Senator Heinz. In addition to Kerry's tremendous financial advantage, Weld has another problem: a third party on the home front. The Conservative Party of Massachusetts has formed and has an announced Senate candidate, an Irish woman named Susan Gallagher who is anti-affirmative action, anti-abortion, and anti-gun control.

While she will have little money to match the plutocrats above her on the ticket, estimates are Gallagher could garner three to ten percent of the vote from disgruntled conservatives, particularly Republicans aggravated by liberal Republicans like Mitt Romney, who lost to Senator Edward Kennedy in 1994. In a close race, which this is expected to be, a few points could cost Weld the election.

*—**Larry Overlan** is president of the New England Institute for Public Policy.*

ANYBODY FEELING DISABLED?

Not long ago, Multiple Chemical Syndrome—a recently minted diagnosis for individuals who say they have violent sensitivity reactions to chemical-containing substances like perfume, detergent, and carpet—was declared to be a disability under the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA). Don't lay off that dishwasher in your restaurant who says he can't tolerate soap because it gives him hives; you might be breaking federal law.

Coca-Cola executive Robert Burch was fired when he made violent, threatening remarks at a company party, but he sued, claiming this was illegal discrimination—because he is an alcoholic, which also now counts as a disability. He won a multi-million-dollar judgment.

Meanwhile, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has sued Exxon for its policy of excluding from safety-sensitive jobs any employee with a history of drug or alcohol abuse. Exxon instituted the policy after receiving severe criticism for the *Valdez* oil spill in Alaska, which occurred when an intoxicated captain crashed his tanker. Should be an interesting test of which fanaticism is more powerful—environmental puritanism or anti-discrimination righteousness.

Not long ago, writer James Bovard produced a catalogue of creative uses of the Disabilities Act. Some examples: A 410-pound man sued the New York Transit Authority after he was denied a promotion from cleaner to train operator on safety grounds. A deaf woman sued Burger King because its drive-through windows discriminated against the mute. A Tufts University college student claimed that her aversion to test-taking was a disability protected by the ADA. "Dyscalculia," a learning disability that prevents a student from understanding math, has been offered as a condition science majors must not be punished for. A Suffolk University professor denied tenure sued that school on the grounds that she should not be punished for having a disease that results in lower productivity. When Professor Donald Winston of Central Maine Technical College was fired for having sex with students, he sued the school for discriminating against him because he suffered from a "sexual addiction," as attested by two doctors at his trial.

Tens of thousands of ADA-inspired disability discrimination cases have been filed with the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission since 1990.

TIME FOR TOUGHNESS OVER TAIWAN

In a SCAN item in our November/December issue we sketched our impressions of Taiwanese politics after a visit there, and described how the communists in mainland China were trying to intimidate the Taiwanese people as they approached the first free election of a president in China's 5,000 year history. The prospect of a democratically elected Chinese government right next door makes the despots running the People's Republic (see our feature article on China in this issue) very nervous.

Recent reports say that the mainland has seriously considered launching missile attacks against Taiwan if President Lee Teng-hui wins the election. Beijing refuses comment, and pointedly refuses to rule out military action. This may be Chinese-opera-style bluster. But then again, coming from the masterminds of the Tiananmen Square massacre, the repression of Tibetans and political dissidents, the PRC's brutal one-child-only population policy, and numerous other human rights atrocities, maybe not.

At the end of January, the U.S. Defense Department confirmed that the carrier *Nimitz* and four escort vessels had detoured through the Taiwan Strait, marking the first U.S. Navy presence in the area in 17 years. This is most appropriate.

Taiwan is a model to other Third World

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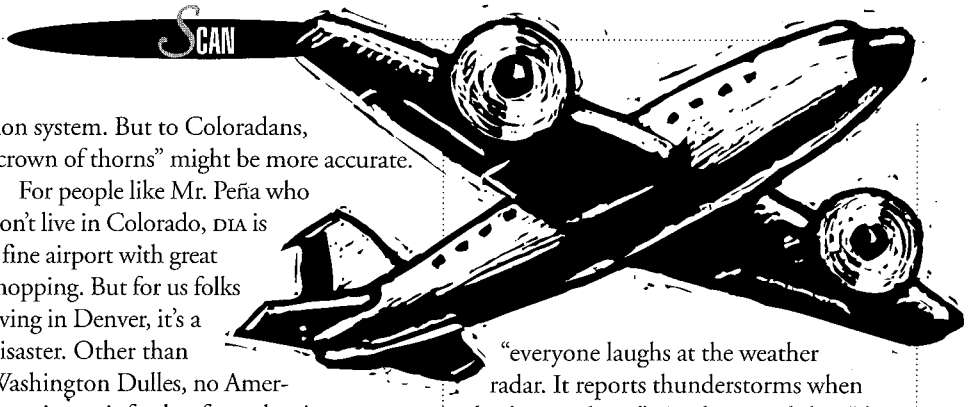

nations seeking a path out of poverty and despotism. It is a peaceful and legitimately ruled republic, bound to America by cultural friendship and strong economic ties. Let us hope our president—so quick to intervene in places where the foe (and the American interest) is weak—has quietly made it crystal-clear to the Chinese that waging war on a free neighbor is something the United States will not accept.

OPPRESSIVE ACADEME

In last issue's SCAN we described how growing disgust with the Modern Language Association—academia's largest literary organization—had recently led to the founding of an MLA-alternative: the Association of Literary Scholars and Critics. In this issue's MAIL section, MLA executive director Phyllis Franklin defends her organization, insisting it is open to all points of view.

Recently, however, we received a copy of a letter to Ms. Franklin from the distinguished Solzhenitsyn scholar Edward Ericson, explaining his resignation from the MLA after 25 years, including five years on an executive committee. He writes: "I had intended that my dropping out of MLA would be a silent protest. Since, however, you have asked about it, I do you the courtesy of replying....

"The major reason is that MLA is no longer diverse enough for me to feel included. As a Christian and a cultural conservative, I feel very much marginalized by the new direction MLA has taken. On principle, I disapprove of MLA's role as a political pressure group.... The new direction of MLA...is on display most dishearteningly at the annual conventions. The ubiquitous race/class/gender intonings violate my belief in a universal human nature.... In short, what MLA now fosters has a hegemonic quality about it which both oppresses and depresses me...."

NEW DEMOCRAT AIRPORT

Denver International Airport (DIA) turned one year old on February 28. U.S. Transportation Secretary Federico Peña, who masterminded DIA during two terms as Mayor of Denver, will undoubtedly celebrate the birthday of what he calls the "crown jewel" of the American transportation system. But to Coloradans, "crown of thorns" might be more accurate.

For people like Mr. Peña who don't live in Colorado, DIA is a fine airport with great shopping. But for us folks living in Denver, it's a disaster. Other than Washington Dulles, no American airport is further from the city center. Denver's old Stapleton Airport, just a few minutes from downtown, was closed to prevent it from competing with DIA. Now getting to and from DIA can take longer than the plane trip itself.

DIA was sold to voters as a $1.5 billion project. Considering the cost overrun of more than 200 percent (caused in part by the aggressive use of racial preferences by Mayor Peña and his successor, Mayor Webb), the enormous interest on airport debt (caused by the junk rating on some of the airport bonds), and the costs of losing Stapleton, the $1.5 billion airport will cost over $12 billion—enough money to run the entire Denver government and all its services for 30 years.

DIA's airlines have to pay the costs of DIA through their landing fees, and they pass these costs directly on to their customers. So instead of spending $980 for a United Airlines round-trip from Denver to San Francisco, some travelers now drive an hour south to the new Colorado Springs airport, fly United from Colorado Springs to Denver to San Francisco (without need to deplane in Denver), and pay only $252.

Even with subsidy offers from the city of Denver, DIA has been unable to attract low-cost airlines to compete with United.

Not surprisingly, traffic at DIA is down 7 percent compared to Stapleton, and far below the grandiose projections on which DIA was based. Denver's net income from DIA is less than half of what it received from Stapleton for comparable periods. Meanwhile, the Colorado Springs airport is booming.

Denver's $593 million automated baggage system, a national laughingstock, will never work as designed. The local office of the Securities and Exchange Commission has recommended Denver be prosecuted for defrauding bondholders by covering up known baggage system problems during airport construction. The president of the local air traffic controllers union says "everyone laughs at the weather radar. It reports thunderstorms when they're not there." He also noted that "the ground radar goes out all the time."

DIA's tented roof looks as if all the circuses in the world had set up operations next to each other. Then-mayor Peña insisted on the tented roof as "a global statement," rejecting design plans for a conventional roof. Several engineers, however, have expressed grave fears about this "global statement." The sprinkler system cannot reach much of the roof, and if it burns it will release fumes deadlier than mustard gas. Critics also worry that the airport roof may collapse under the weight of snow and ice buildup in the crevices (as did the Minneapolis Metrodome, designed by the same company). The roof has an energy efficiency rating of R1.8; the average American home is R30, and new ones aim for R60. Utility costs are consequently enormous.

The roof problems are currently minor compared to the floor problems. Denver opted to install an expensive form of Italian granite only half the thickness of normal granite floors. Rejecting a qualified bid from an American company to put in granite of standard thickness for $4.9 million, the city ended up spending $12 million, even after saving money by installing carpets in many areas intended for granite. Now the granite is cracking, creating a tripping hazard. Some panels have sunk below the rest of the floor. When *Westword,* Denver's alternative weekly, raised questions about the granite floor during construction, a Denver government architect replied (quite presciently), "Like the roof, it will be a hallmark of the airport."

When nominating Federico Peña to be Secretary of Transportation, President Clinton promised that Mr. Peña would do for America what he has done for Denver. One can only be thankful that this promise remains unfulfilled.

*—**David B. Kopel** is research director of the Independence Institute in Golden, Colorado.*

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BY KARL ZINSMEISTER

Indicators

TALK RADIO LISTENERS

In September 1995, Adams Research released one of the first detailed studies of political talk radio's national audience. More than 3,000 individuals were surveyed, and some of the results contradicted common views of talk radio.

For one, **the talk radio audience is significantly better educated, more affluent, and more politically participatory than the general public** (see chart below). And listeners describe talk radio not just as a place to rehash old news and familiar views but as a "very important" (33 percent) or "moderately important" (34 percent) "source of political information and ideas."

The audience for these shows is large. **More than a fifth of the public (21 percent) are regular listeners to political call-in shows.** Another 26 percent are occasional listeners.

THE BOOBS TUBE

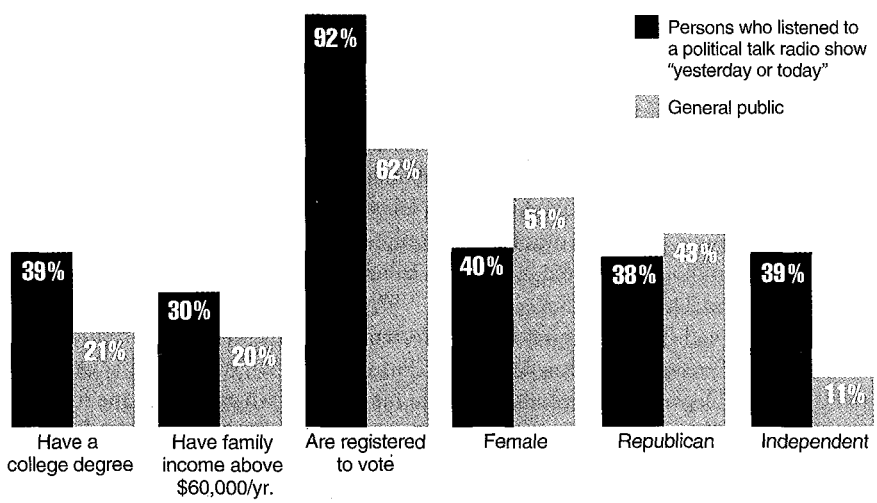
"Casual sexual activity has become TV's main theme," says cultural critic Gertrude Himmelfarb. After a recent period of monitoring sit-coms and dramas she reports that "promiscuity is what evening television is now about."

A recent book-length study of television's portrayal of American culture conducted by S. Robert Lichter, Linda Lichter, Stanley Rothman, and Daniel Amundson reached the same conclusion. "Foreplay has surpassed gunplay as prime time's favorite pastime," they summarize. **"Researchers recently tallied a sexual act or reference every four minutes during prime time."** An average American TV viewer "now sees nearly 14,000 instances of sexual material every year."

Based on their own detailed content study, Lichter, Lichter, Rothman, and Amundson report the following facts:

- In scenes dealing with sex between unmarried partners, only five percent suggested that having sex would be wrong for any reason. In 76 percent of the cases the script endorsed the desirability of having sex. In the remaining 19 percent of sex scenes, no judgment was passed either way.
- As recently as the late 1970s, "only a minority of all consenting sexual relationships were sanctioned as appropriate. Today it is the rejection of sex that is deviant" on network television.
- "It is a measure of how quickly prime-time standards have changed that one out of every five scenes involving premarital sex concerned teenagers. (Teen sex almost never occurred on prime-time series before the 1990s.)" Fully 42 percent of all scripts now endorse premarital sex among teenagers, compared to only 25 percent that criticize it. In an additional 33 percent of cases, "young love was consummated without eliciting any judgment."
- Sexual understanding among young people "increasingly comes from prime-time players rather than parents or peers. As a National Institute for Mental Health report recently concluded, 'entertainment television has become an important sex educator.'"
- "Prior to 1969, we coded fewer than one instance of extramarital sex in every 30 shows. During the early 1970s, extramarital sex cropped up on about one out of every eight shows. Since the mid-1970s, the ratio has dropped to one in six, and it continues to narrow."
- "The only aspect of sex that television still avoids is its biological consequences...only one in every 85 sexual references on television concerned sex education, birth control, abortion, or sexually transmitted diseases."

TALK RADIO AUDIENCE PROFILE



Source: Adams Research, Inc. Random nationwide survey of 3,035 persons 18 and older, July 7–August 7, 1995.

INEFFECTIVE RATINGS

"Despite the R-rating that supposedly restricts viewing to people over 18 unless accompanied by an adult, two-thirds of a sample of high school students in Michigan reported that they were able to rent or watch any VCR movie they wanted, and the movies they most frequently viewed were R-rated."

(Jane Brown and Jeanne Steele in a paper presented to the American Enterprise Institute, September 1995, citing a 1993 study by Buerkel-Rothfuss, Strouse, Pettey, and Shatzer.)

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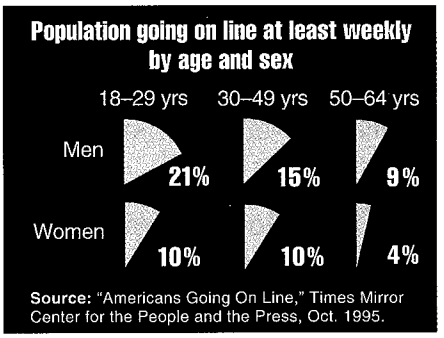
INTERNET FACT AND FICTION

Like many exciting new innovations, on-line computing is currently aswirl in hype. Even experts who should know better are getting caught up in Internet exaggeration. Last October, Nielsen Media Research—of TV ratings fame—released a report claiming to be the first scientific study of Internet usage in the U.S. and Canada. The 150-page document was sold for $5,000 a copy, and its conclusion that 24 million North Americans currently use the Internet was repeated heavily in the press. In December, though, the main statistical adviser to the study charged that, like most other Internet-usage research, it was skewed toward individuals of higher education and income (who are more likely to be on line), and that its projections for the population as a whole are therefore unreliable.

An alternative December survey by the Emerging Technologies Research Group concluded that **9.5 million Americans—3.6 percent of the population—use the Internet,** including 1.1 million children.

Another survey released in October by the Times Mirror Center estimated that 24 million Americans had ever used a computer connected to another computer by modem. This includes workplace and school-related networks, local bulletin board services, commercial services like CompuServe, plus Internet connections. The Times Mirror study found that **only three percent of Americans have ever signed onto the World Wide Web,** the most popular portion of the Internet.

The Times Mirror figures make it clear that on-line computing is disproportionately a young person's game at present. There are also sharp variations by sex:



Source: "Americans Going On Line," Times Mirror Center for the People and the Press, Oct. 1995.

According to the Emerging Technologies study, **women are twice as likely as men to use the Internet exclusively for business.** Times Mirror finds that men are three times likelier to log on outside of work or school, mostly because they play a lot more.

Play is actually a big portion of on-line activity. A third of the Times Mirror respondents were on line "all" or "mostly" for pleasure. Another 20 percent described their trolling as half pleasure/half work. Emerging Technologies researchers found that 52 percent of all World Wide Web sites were visited for personal reasons, 35 percent for business, and 13 percent for academic reasons.

Fully 14 percent of those who go on line from home operate a home-based business—double the proportion among the population at large.

According to Times Mirror, "there are few signs in the study that use of on-line services or the Internet is changing traditional consumption patterns for news or goods and other services. Only four percent of all Americans are getting the news on line at least once a week, and the overwhelming proportion of them (87 percent) said this activity has not affected their reliance on traditional news sources.... Similarly, commerce on line is relatively modest."

More generally, these authors note, "the study detected a decided softness in attitudes toward on-line activities, and a fragile pattern of use. **Only 32 percent of those who go on line say they would miss it 'a lot' if no longer available.** This compares to nearly twice as many computer users (63 percent), newspaper readers (58 percent), and cable TV subscribers (54 percent), who say the same.... The frequency of on-line activity is also modest. Just 20 percent of on-line users go on line every day."

MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS CLIPS

✂ FAR OUT

Use of various political terms in newspaper articles, 1994:

	"Radical Right, Far Right, or Extreme Right"	"Radical Left, Far Left, or Extreme Left"	Ratio: Right to Left
New York Times	211	50	4.2:1
San Francisco Chronicle	147	49	3.0:1
Chicago Tribune	214	123	1.7:1

Source: CD-ROM keyword search by Allan Levite.

✂ ATLANTA *$(% VS. CLEVELAND @*!&#

Question: What is it that newspapers in Seattle, Portland, Minneapolis, and other cities refuse to print? **Answer:** The Indian nicknames of sports teams.

✂ TV EPITAPH

"The average American will invest 13 years of life—that's 13 uninterrupted years of 24-hour days, 7 days a week—watching television. Do you want that on your gravestone: 'Here lies our beloved husband and father who selflessly devoted over 13 years of life to his TV set.'?"—*media critic Michael Medved*

1995 Media Consumption (hours per person per year)

Television and home videos	1,579
Recorded music	274
Daily newspapers	166
Consumer magazines	84
Consumer books	100
Movies in theaters	11

Source: Communications Industry Forecast Report.

✂ EXPERTS

Proportion of foreign correspondents who are able to conduct interviews in the language of their base country:

Newspapers	42%
Newmagazines	46%
Television	21%

Source: Study by Stephen Hess.

✂ CYBER GUTTER

A 1995 *Georgetown Law Journal* study of 917,410 images posted on "adult" computerized bulletin boards (images which were downloaded a total of 8.5 million times over the several month period of the study by users providing credit card numbers) found that about half of the images were of pedophilic or paraphilic (bestial, excretory, torture) acts.

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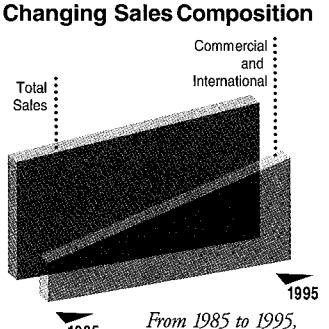
STRENGTH. Companies that have it possess the power to grow by dramatically transforming their composition.

▲ The way Rockwell, over the last ten years, has changed itself into a dynamic commercial force. ▲ Today, our $13 billion company's strength is reflected in a sales mix that has evolved to more than 70 percent commercial and international business. Making us a rapidly growing force in diverse markets ranging from semiconductor systems and automotive to industrial automation – while maintaining our leadership positions in aerospace and

Changing Sales Composition



From 1985 to 1995, Rockwell changed its sales mix to more than 70 percent commercial and international by leveraging new technologies and products, unique synergies, and global opportunities to aggressively serve its customers.

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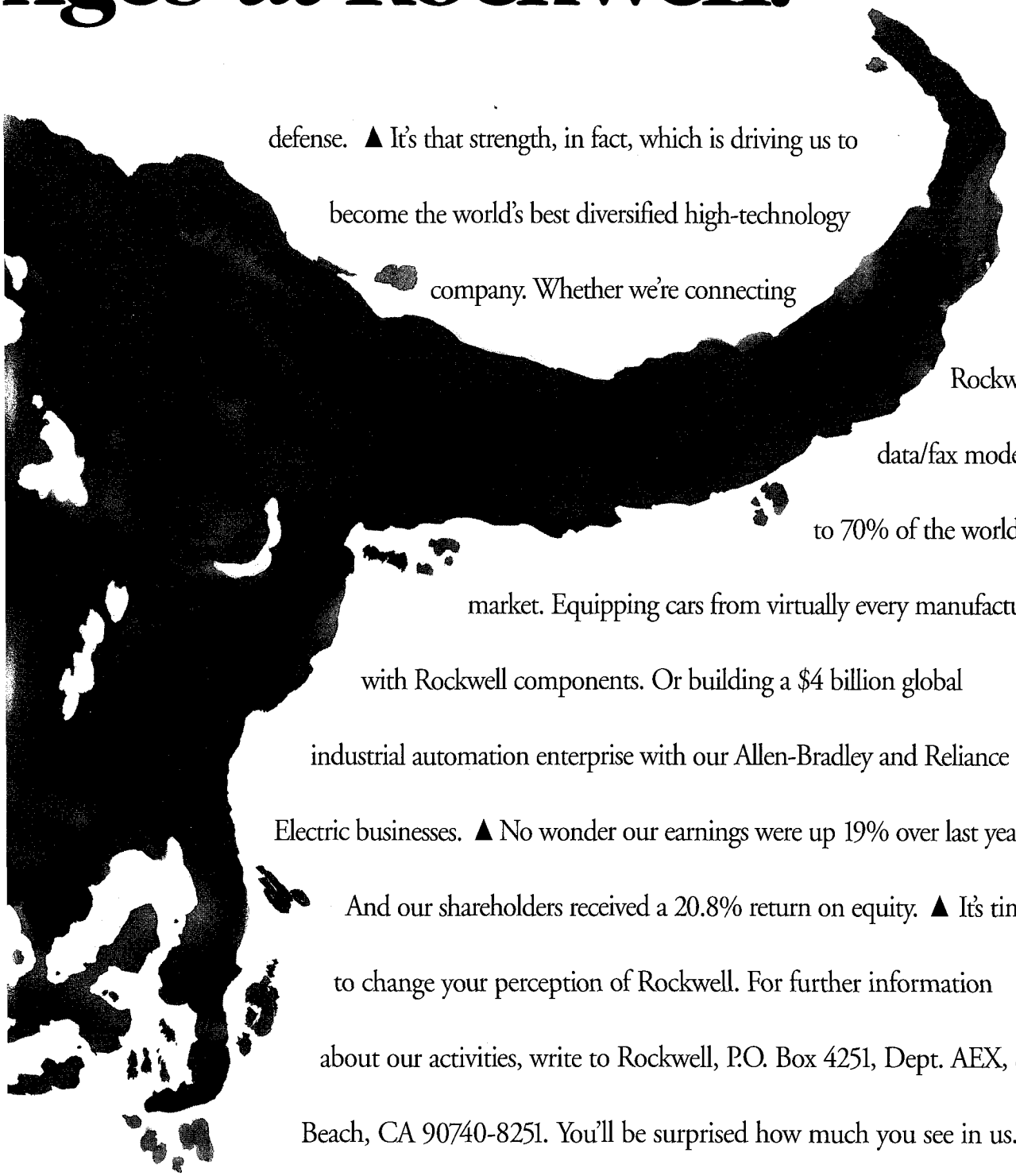
be an analyst to nges at Rockwell.



defense. ▲ It's that strength, in fact, which is driving us to become the world's best diversified high-technology company. Whether we're connecting Rockwell data/fax modems to 70% of the world market. Equipping cars from virtually every manufacturer with Rockwell components. Or building a $4 billion global industrial automation enterprise with our Allen-Bradley and Reliance Electric businesses. ▲ No wonder our earnings were up 19% over last year. And our shareholders received a 20.8% return on equity. ▲ It's time to change your perception of Rockwell. For further information about our activities, write to Rockwell, P.O. Box 4251, Dept. AEX, Seal Beach, CA 90740-8251. You'll be surprised how much you see in us.

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"Live" with TAE

IN A NEWSPAPER WORLD DOMINATED BY CHAINS AND FACELESS CONGLOMERATES, CONRAD BLACK IS ONE OF THE LAST OF THE OLD-FASHIONED PRESS BARONS.

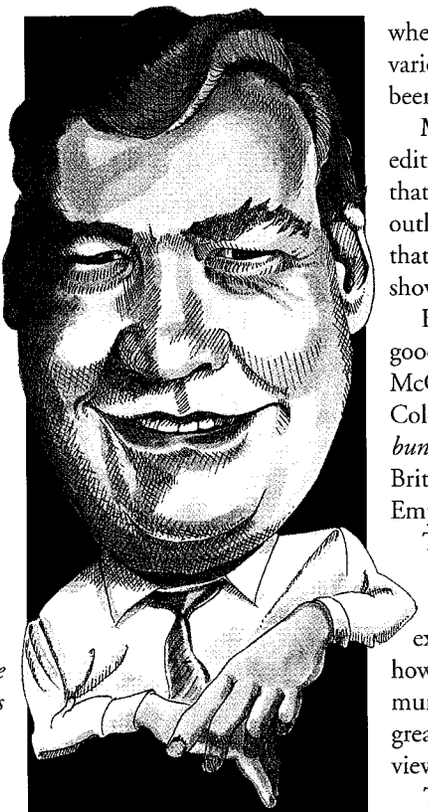
Conrad Black

Conrad Black, chairman of the Canadian-based Hollinger Inc., presides over the fastest-growing media empire in the world: its properties include the Telegraph *papers of Britain, the* Chicago Sun-Times, *the* Jerusalem Post, *and almost 500 daily and weekly papers in the United States, Canada, and Australia, from* The Vancouver Sun *to the* Punxsutawney *(PA)* Spirit.

Black's press clippings make him sound like a Canadian-accented version of Orson Welles' Charles Foster Kane. He is called both "erudite" and "rapacious"; Ontario Premier Bob Rae mocked him as a "symbol of bloated capitalism at its worst," while supporters praise him as the most brilliant newspaper proprietor of his era. He and the Telegraph *have recently emerged, unbowed, from a price war with Rupert Murdoch.*

Born to a prominent family in English-speaking Montreal, Black's headquarters are in Toronto, though since his purchase of the Telegraph *in 1985 he has spent the better part of his time in London. He remains one of Canada's most controversial figures: as Quebec has edged closer to independence, Black and his wife, the columnist Barbara Amiel, have mused on the possibility of a U.S.-Canada merger.*

Associate Editor Bill Kauffman interviewed Conrad Black at his Toronto office.



There is always going to be a place for a newspaper. After a while, it's a damned nuisance carrying a screen around with you.

TAE: Elsewhere in this issue, Michael Barone argues that we may be about to see the revival of sharp-edged partisan newspapers—that the days of mushy, Gannett-style, "objective" journalism are numbered and the likes of Colonel McCormick and William Loeb will ride again. Does this sound at all plausible?

MR. BLACK: The two can coexist, and they always have coexisted, haven't they? I accept that Colonel McCormick and Mr. Loeb are dead, but there are rather opinionated publishers around.

But I think for that to happen you need a revival of proprietors. Loeb and McCormick were resident proprietor-publishers. I am not so sure that I see that happening.

TAE: The analogy might be American radio, where in the last five years Rush Limbaugh and various populist ranters have revitalized what had been a dying medium.

MR. BLACK: I had a talk with a prominent editor in the United States a while ago. He said that the daily press had failed to give a proper outlet to a large section of the people, who found that outlet in these radio and television talk shows. There may be some truth to that.

By the way, I would defend Rush. He is a good deal more reasonable than Colonel McCormick was. I always rather admired the Colonel for giving such a personality to the *Tribune,* but he was outrageous. I mean, he had the British Empire always referred to as "the Brutish Empire." He defamed people regularly.

TAE: An old-fashioned Anglophobe.

MR. BLACK: Yes, pandering to the Germans and Irish in the Midwest. And also an extreme right-winger, claiming that Eisenhower was a leftist and that Roosevelt was a communist and so on. He was a colorful man, and a great man in a way, but some of his political views were really off the wall.

TAE: Hasn't one bane of contemporary journalism been the disappearance of the resident proprietor?

MR. BLACK: I think so. They give a personality to a paper. And it does become harder and harder to do it, if you get more and more papers. Perhaps even the Colonel found that.

TAE: The nearest big city to me, Rochester, is one link in the Gannett chain. And Gannett sends to Rochester corporate careerists to write editorials that don't have a Rochester accent. They could be written for Des Moines or El Paso or anywhere. These people see Rochester simply as another rung on the ladder to Fort Lauderdale or *USA Today* or whatever the summit of the Gannett world is. Isn't this what chains do: blanket us with a suffocating homogeneity?

MR. BLACK: I would, perhaps, de-escalate slightly the phrase "suffocating homogeneity." But I'm afraid there is a cookie-cutter approach. That

Illustration by Lucinda S. Levine

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need not be the case, but in practice it often has been. I think they have become impotent paymasters managing a budget and taking no interest in editorial. Leaving in a state of complete lassitude the so-called local working press to do what they want can lead to some pretty disagreeable results. Or, in the alternative, they've just imposed bland everywhere. Some of the chains have done that.

TAE: Will the decline in American newspaper readership ever be arrested or reversed?

MR. BLACK: We're obviously in a state where new media are carving the pie into more and more slices, and that means all the existing media have to give some ground. It's a pie that's being divided more quickly than it's expanding. But I think that at, as the British would say, the popular level, the more down-market tabloid level, there's much more of a danger. Those are essentially newspapers for entertainment. And if entertainment is what you want, a newspaper is not necessarily the best place to get it.

At the higher quality newspapers, I think the circulation you're losing is the less profitable circulation, and what you're keeping tends to be the most literate, educated, and prosperous people. So you're saving yourselves newsprint costs—"you" being the publishers—while not losing, if the franchise is managed properly, the advertisers. So I see it as not necessarily all bad. Eventually the newspapers will give greater flexibility as to how the content is delivered. Those who want it on the screen can get it on the screen.

TAE: There's a tactile delight, isn't there, in holding a paper and folding it?

MR. BLACK: And there's a portability and a non-linear aspect to it. Except if you've got a screen where you can call up what you want, you get away from having things just scrolled across at the direction of someone that you have no power over. There is always going to be a place for a newspaper. After a while, it's a damned nuisance carrying a screen around with you.

So I think the trend you described will be arrested. I would have my doubts about its being reversed. But already, the fragmentation of channels in television is reducing the efficacy of television advertising. And the existence of the remote control device in almost all viewers' hands reduces the efficacy of television advertising. Whereas, if you have advertised in the *New York Times,* you know that the people you want are going to read it.

TAE: You've been through a price war with the *Telegraph.* Aren't price wars ultimately good for the newspaper industry? Don't they encourage people to start buying newspapers again?

MR. BLACK: Well, I think as it's turned out that particular war has probably been good for us. It strengthened our franchise. We've got millions of pounds of free publicity out of it. A great many people in Britain had been accustomed to thinking of the *Daily* and *Sunday Telegraph* as their parents' or grandparents' newspaper, and we've actually succeeded in lowering the average age of our reader. And we have the self-confidence that comes from having been squarely in the crosshairs of the world's foremost media proprietor, who attacked us in a manner that wasn't at all personal. He couldn't be a more gracious individual. But that's scant consolation in a competitive situation.

Rupert Murdoch has done some great things that required courage and vision. He also is a cynic who thinks that the average member of the public is essentially a slob.

He attacked us by trying to clone our paper, raid our journalists, and produce a look-alike paper that published more pages and was sold at a lower price and was more heavily promoted. And it was a strategy that was disquieting, but we have weathered it well. On the broader question, it hasn't raised circulation of newspapers as a group all that much.

TAE: Do you admire Murdoch as a swashbuckling buccaneer, or do you think he's a vulgarian who's dragged the popular taste further into the muck?

MR. BLACK: The answer to the first part is, yes, I do admire him in that respect; not just as a swashbuckling buccaneer, but a bold builder of enterprises. The fact is, he's done some great things that required courage and vision and were objectively good things. He cracked the absolutely outrageous, unsustainable labor practices in the newspaper industry in London. Now, Mrs. Thatcher's regime made it possible, but the fact is, he did it. Needed to be done. Recognizing that the three-network quasi-shared monopoly of American television could be cracked: that took great courage and application. Seeing the potential of satellite television in Britain, where you had to persuade people to buy the dish and then tune in to you: he almost went bankrupt doing it, but it was the action of a great industrialist. See, he's not just a swashbuckling buccaneer. I rather admire him more as an industrialist who's been a pioneer.

On the second point, I think at heart Rupert Murdoch, whom I rather like as an individual, is a cynic who thinks that the average member of the public is essentially a slob, and the lower you pitch it to him the better he likes it. And I don't agree with that. I have a higher opinion of the average person than I believe he does. A great industrialist, a very nice man socially, a swashbuckling buccaneer, and a cynical panderer to rather base instincts—all of those aspects of him coexist quite happily. He's relatively untroubled and, as far as I can see, not at all a neurotic personality—

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unlike many great media proprietors of the past.

TAE: "Conrad Black could walk through the front door of any of his papers in Ohio or Idaho, and nobody would have the first idea of who the hell he was," one of your employees told Nicholas Coleridge, author of *Paper Tigers.* Is the editorial quality of your smaller papers of interest to you, or just the profitability?

MR. BLACK: We have a division of work in our company, and my associate, Mr. [David] Radler, takes care of those. So the same statement—which is accurate as quoted—could not be made about him. They would know who he was. I must confess that the editorial quality of the individual papers—those smaller ones—is not something I can get too much involved in, but some of them are very good.

TAE: Doesn't this lead back to what we were talking about earlier, though? Wouldn't the *Punxsutawney Spirit* be better off if there were a resident proprietor who knew Punxsutawney?

MR. BLACK: It's hard to answer a hypothesis like that. I mean, was it better off before we bought it? I would have thought not. I think that it's probably commercially a bit stronger and the editorial product is no weaker. That's a paper that is known a bit because of the *Groundhog Day* movie. And that is one paper that I do look at occasionally.

The editor who is there now is the same one who was there before we bought it, and he is quite an opinionated and colorful local personality. And he is encouraged by us to continue as he was before. We try to avoid precisely the phenomenon you described at the outset, of chains producing the cookie-cutter newspapers that are all bland. We don't move editors around. We always try to encourage local people to take a local viewpoint and really push the local angle.

TAE: Twenty-five years ago you told a Canadian Senate committee: "My experience with journalists authorizes me to report that a very large number of them are ignorant, lazy, opinionated, intellectually dishonest, and inadequately supervised. The profession is heavily cluttered with abrasive youngsters who substitute commitment for insight; and, to a lesser extent, with aged hacks toiling through a miasma of mounting decrepitude. Alcoholism is endemic in both groups." Is this still the case?

MR. BLACK: Much less so. I think it was the case when I said it. I was speaking especially of journalists in Quebec in 1969, and I was appalled at the pro-separatist biases and just how overwhelmingly left-wing their views were. They had these over-zealous crusading youth—all of them thinking they were Bob Woodwards of the future—and these rather pathetic hacks who didn't have the energy to try to maintain standards. That's changed a lot. In general, the ideological orientation of the so-called working press in North America is much more varied and more representative of the public they're trying to serve.

We have the self-confidence that comes from having been squarely in the crosshairs of the world's foremost media proprietor.

TAE: You moved your principal residence from Toronto to England because of "the cultural bigotry in Quebec, the inexorable erosion towards the left in Ontario, the constitutional quagmire, the pandemic envy, mediocrity, and sanctimony." Given that an independent Quebec now seems inevitable, are you considering a full repatriation? And do you, in fact, see the division of Canada as inevitable?

MR. BLACK: I still have my house here, and here we are in my office, so I haven't slammed the door. I haven't done a Jack Kent Cooke, and just left and pretended I never lived here and can't remember the name of the place. But I left because I thought that a change would be refreshing. Change often is. I thought that it was the responsible thing to do, given the importance of the asset that we'd bought in London.

And not least, I left because London is, after all, with all due respect to Toronto, one of the world's greatest and most elegant cities. Toronto is a very nice place, but it's the top of the second division, and London's at or near the top of the first division. On the second part of your question, no, I don't think the independence of Quebec is inevitable. And if it were achieved, that in itself wouldn't particularly motivate me to come back here. I am, as you know, not at all anti-Quebec. I'm anti-separatist, but pro-French Canadian.

TAE: You and your wife, Barbara Amiel, have both suggested the possibility of a post-Quebec Canadian-American federation of some sort. In fact, you used to tell your separatist friends, "Every vote for the secession of Quebec is a vote to make me a citizen of an expanded United States." This is a frightening prospect for Little Americans. For instance, do we really want the Maritimes? Wouldn't annexing them be a little like adding another Puerto Rico to our country?

MR. BLACK: If I were an American, I'd be delighted if any part of Canada applied for closer adhesion to the United States. There's nothing wrong with the Maritimes at all, except that they've become accustomed to receiving heavy regional welfare payments. The Americans would not engage in such programs.

And I think that the comparison with Puerto Rico is not accurate. The Atlantic Provinces populations speak English. They are not people who would be difficult to assimilate in the mainstream of American life.

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My preferred alternative is a bicultural Canada—by which I do not mean people coerced to learn a language other than their mother tongue; I mean two cultural communities that respect each other and fundamentally feel that it is a good thing that they have each other to share a country with.

If that's not going to work, then I think the continent is better divided along linguistic lines than geographic ones. If the United States seriously examined the possibility of benignly and with complete voluntarism on each side extending itself to include non-French Canada—Canada apart from Quebec—the lure of more than 20 million English-speaking people, well-educated, prosperous, law-abiding, entirely compatible with the United States, and this vast treasure house of natural resources, would be an opportunity for the United States to be born again geopolitically.

TAE: Is Canadian anti-Americanism—and by that I mean resentment of American capitalism and mass culture—sometimes justified? For instance, Canada's most distinguishing achievement in sports, the National Hockey League, is in the process of moving teams from medium-sized Canadian cities—Quebec, Winnipeg, possibly Edmonton—to cities south of the border, some of which have absolutely no hockey tradition. And this is being done under the commissionership of Gary Bettman, a former Disney executive. If you were a fan of the Winnipeg Jets, wouldn't you be tempted to burn an American flag, or at least a flag of Mickey Mouse?

MR. BLACK: To have a team called "The Mighty Ducks," and to have hockey played in places where you could not possibly have a natural ice rink for more than four days in the year—it is a vulgarization I regret.

But I think it would be a rather extreme reaction for people in Winnipeg to burn an American flag because the Winnipeg Jets are not able to make it financially in a community that size, but could do so in an American city to which they might move.

With that said, I understand the reservations of some people, and particularly certain types of Canadians, about American capitalism and mass culture. There are aspects of American life that *are* unappealing, including to a great many Americans.

TAE: You are a convert to Catholicism. Do you ever worry about Christ's statement that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God?

MR. BLACK: Not really, because I've sought clarification for the meaning of that from learned theologians, and I am satisfied that what was intended was not that the wealthy alone be singled out, but that it was a challenging thing to be wealthy and to act in what He would accept as a Christian way. And I think there is some truth to that.

Extending itself to include non-French Canada would be an opportunity for the United States to be born again geopolitically.

That's rather presumptuous of me to say that I think there's some truth to things said by Jesus Christ. Let me word it more respectfully: I can understand the truthfulness of that statement, as I had it interpreted for me.

TAE: It has been reported that your father's last words to you were, "Life is hell, most people are bastards, and everything is bulls--t." First, is this true? And second, was he right?

MR. BLACK: Those were not his last words to me. That's from a book by Peter Newman [*The Establishment Man*]. He didn't get that from me, so I don't know who he source was. Now, in his more morose moments, that was not far from his views. But I don't recall his ever presenting things in quite such—[laughs]—gloomy terms as those. In any case, no, I don't think that everything is bull s--t, and I don't think that all people are bastards.

TAE: It's sometimes said that the role of the press is to speak truth to power. You're a member of the Bilderberg Group and the Trilateral Commission. Is it possible to speak truth to power while you consort with power?

MR. BLACK: There is nothing that need be particularly socially inhibiting about truthfulness. Being truthful doesn't mean being discourteous, and being powerful doesn't mean being uncivilized or intolerant. And the fact is, in the assemblies that you mentioned—where, in fairness, I think the composition is largely selected on the basis of an aptitude of people to have an open and reasonable discussion of a variety of sensible viewpoints—I find exactly the reverse is true: the discussions are very stimulating and very informative, and they sometimes change people's opinions, including mine.

TAE: Are you in the newspaper business primarily to make money, or to make a mark on the world?

MR. BLACK: My very first interest is commercial. A very close second is, it is an interesting business; you get what amounts to a ringside seat to a great deal of what's going on. And my interest is not to dictate to the population or the political leaders what their position should be, but to—again, I'm bordering on self-righteousness here—but to make the debate more interesting and more likely to produce a sensible result. And I think we do that. Anyway, we do our best.

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Why Liberals Find Talk Radio So Threatening

icon illustrations by Geoff Smith

On December 7, 1995, a story in the *New York Times* announced that the Clinton administration would try to sell its Bosnia intervention by putting spokesmen on radio talk shows. "Talk radio is cost free, travel-free and time-efficient, and reaches millions of Americans who do not normally keep *Foreign Affairs* by their bedsides," the article enthused.

An excellent idea, but an unexpected one–for just eight months earlier the president was indicting talk radio as a destructive medium that keeps "some people as paranoid as possible and the rest of us all torn up and upset with each other," a conclusion the media elite fell over each other to agree with. Talk radio is an evil bane to many liberals. According to their view, Svengalis of the airwaves are beguiling credulous followers with right-wing propaganda, playing on fears and prejudice, generating hostility toward compassionate policies, and making the country virtually ungovernable.

In the wake of the Oklahoma City bombing, this fear and loathing reached a fevered pitch. Talk radio was "an unindicted co-conspirator in the blast" argued Richard Lacayo of *Time*. Rush Limbaugh and G. Gordon Liddy are "fomenters of a mood that is fairly described as hateful," said *Washington Post* columnist Jonathan Yardley. "Talk radio is not democracy in action but democracy run amok," insisted NBC reporter Bob Faw. "It's about anger. It's about tearing down," agreed former *Wall Street Journal* reporter Ellen Hume. Conservative talk shows are "politically partisan and sometimes racist" clucked Dan Rather.

President Clinton himself charged that talk shows "spread hate. They leave the impression, by their very words, that violence is acceptable.... It is time we all stood up and spoke against that kind of reckless speech and behavior." (Backpedaling aides later maintained the president wasn't referring to Limbaugh and colleagues, but rather to extremist shows on shortwave radio.)

Why does the Left loathe talk radio? Is it possible that animus toward this increasingly potent medium says more about the state of liberalism than it does about the nature of the programs? Are call-in forums truly arenas of hate, or just the most recent stage in the evolution of American democracy? And who really makes up the talk radio audience?

By Don Feder

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Talk is the hottest thing on the radio dial. Of the nation's 10,000 stations, approximately 1,000 offer conversation on controversies ranging from sex to politics. Of the syndicated shows, Rush Limbaugh's is far and away the most popular. His daily program, airing on over 660 stations, has an estimated 5 million listeners at any given moment, several times that over the course of a week. That is more than a third of all talk-show listeners nationwide. "What liberals hate most about Rush Limbaugh," observes *Village Voice* columnist Nat Hentoff, "is the size of his audience."

Critics would have us believe that the average listener tunes to Limbaugh or Liddy while clanking along a rural highway in his pickup, gun rack in back, a John Deere cap covering his sloping forehead—the very epitome of a choleric Caucasian guy. Actually, according to a recent survey commissioned by the industry publication *Talk Daily,* nearly half of all adults in the U.S. tune in talk radio at least occasionally. This scientific survey of 3,035 individuals shatters stereotypes about the narrowness of the talk radio audience, finding that most listeners are educated, middle-class, and politically active. (See INDICATORS, page 16.)

Hosts too defy generalities. A 1993 random sampling of 112 talk show hosts by the Times Mirror Center for People and the Press found that many more voted for Clinton (39 percent) than Bush (23 percent) or Perot (18 percent). Prominent liberals like Mario Cuomo, Jim Hightower, and Susan Estrich have their own shows. But those with a liberal bent tend to be much less popular than others. Of the nine most listened-to talkers nationally, only two—Michael Jackson and Tom Leykis—are liberals.

If conservatives dominate talk radio, a series of interviews I conducted with talk masters across the country indicates that it's a broad band of conservatism that goes out over the airwaves. Among the most prominent conservative hosts are African Americans Ken Hamblin, syndicated out of Colorado, and Armstrong Williams, based in Washington D.C. Three of the leading conservative hosts I interviewed are Jewish.

Jerry Williams, the dean of Boston talk radio, might be described as a liberal populist who's as critical of corporate America and Republicans seeking to deregulate the economy as he is of officious bureaucrats and political grifters. Bob Grant, who has New York's top-rated show at WABC, says his defense of Second Amendment rights is principled not personal. "I hate guns," Grant told me. "I don't want one in my house. But I don't want to interfere with my neighbor's right to own a gun." Liberalism was once broadly distinguished by this attitude of "I'll defend to the death your Constitutional rights." David Brudnoy, a 20-year veteran of talk who dominates Boston's nighttime airwaves from WBZ, has two M.A.s and a Ph.D. Conservative on fiscal concerns and libertarian on other matters, last year the well-liked broadcaster announced he has AIDS.

Part of the appeal of talk radio is that unlike the New York-D.C.-L.A. liberalism of network television and newspapers of record, it offers almost every shade and hue of opinion. And it's unfiltered. "It cuts out the middle man," comments G. Gordon Liddy, the nation's second most popular talker. "There are no gatekeepers or spinmeisters. I can communicate directly with the audience, and they with me, and 8 to 10 million people are listening."

Talk radio is the one media forum where ordinary people can actually be heard. Says Brudnoy: "Write a letter to the editor and it takes days to publish, if it's published at all—and then it's often edited. Call a station manager to complain about TV news and get a polite brush-off or a recorded message thanking you for your interest. You can get on most talk shows just by dialing the phone." Oliver North, who's been talking on the airwaves for only a year but is already in the top tier nationwide, notes that "Talk radio is interactive. Listeners know that what they're hearing is authentic." Liddy confesses he can't manage the forum, the way news is often shaped on network broadcasts. "If I hang up on a caller, it's

Don Feder is a nationally syndicated columnist and author of the forthcoming book Who's Afraid of the Religious Right?

Democracy on the Air

"There is something to the nature of talk radio," says former Democratic National Committee chairman David Wilhelm, "which is to tear things down." That pretty much sums up the conventional wisdom about talk radio. In 1993, Rep. Bill Hefner (D –N.C.) accused it of stirring up discontent "to the point where we're not able to govern." Hosts have even been blamed—indirectly, of course—for the Oklahoma City bombing and the series of attempts on President Clinton's life in 1994.

The talk radio audience may indeed be difficult to govern, and they may indeed like to complain. But if you think the medium only gums up the democratic process, you've a rather limited grasp of talk radio's current nature. Take the show hosted by Mike Siegel that runs every afternoon on KVI, Seattle's top-rated talk station. It combines talk's populist fervor with a constructive effort to bring alienated listeners into the public square.

For the last three years, Siegel's show has broadcast live from the state capital each day the state legislature is in session. Usually, this means setting up shop in Olympia for about two months out of 12; in a budget year, like 1995, it can take as many as four. A steady flow of legislators and administrators come on the program to speak directly with their constituents; so do people visiting Olympia to testify for or against pending legislation. Listeners thus have a chance to press their representatives about the issues that matter most to them.

And what do they want to talk about? Some of the most popular topics are the issues common to every state: crime, education, government waste. Others are specific to Washington, like performance audits: Siegel has devoted several shows to the need for a better tool to measure government efficiency, arguing that the legislature should not be trusted to audit itself. Siegel has also spent many of his Olympia shows (and many Seattle-based broadcasts too) looking into the state's ludicrously mismanaged Department of Social and Health Services, particularly its Division of Children and Family

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Services. "Washington Watch," a group Siegel founded, is calling for an inspector general to investigate DSHS; it also argues that the department should be broken up into smaller, more manageable agencies.

Siegel has been in the talk radio business for 23 years, taking his current position at KVI in 1991. A populist, anti-Clinton Democrat, Siegel doesn't fit easily into categones like "Left" and "Right." He helped organize a boycott of Exxon after the *Valdez* oil spill and has been a harsh critic of the BATF. He speaks out for freedom of speech and against government waste.

Siegel's show allows callers of all political persuasions to put their political concerns on the table—and to get a better understanding of just how legislating gets done. Is there any other media in the country that covers a state legislature in such depth? And Siegel's listeners have responded to the Olympia shows with overwhelming favor.

Rep. Hefner may consider this ungovernability, but most would call it democracy.

Jesse Walker is assistant editor of Liberty.

obvious to listeners that I can't handle him. At least callers have a chance to make their points."

Talk radio does more than just kvetch and criticize. It regularly prods hidebound political systems into action, and mobilizes listeners to institute (or turn back) social reforms. The defeat of the Clinton health care proposal is attributed in part to activists of the airwaves. And when the administration tried to retaliate in 1994 with a bill that would have stifled citizen lobbying (Limbaugh dubbed it "Hillary's revenge") calls and letters from angry listeners stopped the measure dead in its tracks.

In 1993, talk radio contributed to the enactment of an obscure but important reform that brought some glasnost to Congress. Prior to that time, the public could not know the names of House members who signed discharge petitions to pry stalled legislation out of committee. As a result, lawmakers would frequently pay lip service to a bill for public consumption, while secretly opposing efforts to bring it to the floor. But then several talk radio hosts took up the issue. Soon, angry constituents—filled-in on the problem by local broadcasts—began beseiging legislators who refused to back a proposal to make signatories public. The "gag rule" was lifted with votes to spare, striking a major blow for openness and action on Capitol Hill.

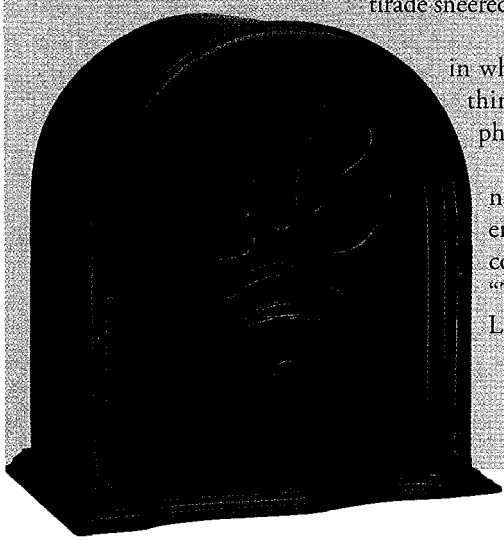
Another example of talk radio's positive contributions to the political process is Washington state's three-strikes-and-you're-out law. This was one of the country's first proposals to put serious repeat offenders behind bars for life, and John Carlson, who hosts a show on Seattle's KVI, contributed heavily to the law's enactment. Carlson says he discovered that a small number of violent criminals were committing the majority of crimes in Washington, and that punishment for repeaters was absurdly lenient. For someone convicted of a third child molestation, the recommended sentence was nine-and-one-half years. The Washington Institute, a think tank which Carlson co-founded, did research to support the measure, and then in 1993 the Seattle host used his radio program to mobilize a volunteer force that collected over a quarter-million signatures to put the initiative on the statewide ballot that year.

Are Talk Radio Hosts Dummies?

As a long-time listener to Rush Limbaugh's radio show I can almost predict what callers are going to say before they say it. I have all the pertinent tones of voice down pat, and I can gauge callers' moods by the way they alternate pauses and word clusters.

The most easily identified voice is that of the liberal intellectual: petulant, sneery, smoldering, and ragingly ineffectual. If it's a *female* liberal intellectual you can add to that list "the kind of voice that filled the French Foreign Legion." I need not explain what that is—every man knows.

One day last year Limbaugh received a call from a woman who took issue with him on some topic, and then at the end of her tirade sneered, "after all, *you* didn't go to college, but *I* am a graduate of Penn State."



Her attempted put-down reminded me of a show Limbaugh did a few years ago in which he delivered a bit of off-the-cuff exposition on the importance of thinking things through for oneself. He used as his example the seventeenth-century French philosopher Blaise Pascal.

Even the college graduate in me was surprised when Limbaugh threw out that name. Most people don't go around reading Pascal in their spare time, but that's apparently just what Mr. Talk Radio had done. Holding forth on one of the world's most complicated thinkers, he recommended Pascal's *Pensées* to his listeners with the promise, "That book will send a thrill up your spine, just as it did for me." Rush Limbaugh may not be an educated man, but he most certainly is a learned one.

—Florence King

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"I made it a priority on my show to discuss and debate three strikes at every opportunity," Carlson told me. "My goal wasn't just to pass three strikes but to change public attitudes about how to fight crime." And pass it did, by a landslide 76 percent vote. When Carlson and his cadre came back the following year with another initiative called Hard Time for Armed Crime (providing longer sentences for crimes committed with weapons) state legislators threw up their hands and passed the reform before it could be placed on the ballot.

The success of conservative hosts is a populist phenomenon. Conservative shows are oases in a media desert that has been dominated by liberals for decades. "Liberals have been controlling the dialogue and they've gotten smug about it," notes Chicago host Dick Staub, based at WYLL. "There was pent-up demand." Chuck Adler, of WRKO in Boston, remarks that conservatives more easily relate to the values of middle-class listeners. "Liberals feel superior to working families. Conservative talk-show hosts champion the values liberals disdain, like the work ethic—work hard and you'll get ahead."

Mike Rosen, whose show airs on KOA in Denver, says the appeal of conservatives lies in their ability to empathize with and expand on the views of Middle America. "Someone calls. They're sincere; but they're not comfortable with the details. I restate their position, smooth it out, amplify the message for thousands of listeners. The caller is delighted: 'Yeah, that's what I wanted to say!'"

Hamblin, whose show is carried by over 100 stations, pronounces talk radio "the last electronic neighborhood" and "a giant backyard." Raised in a crime-ridden Harlem neighborhood by a West Indian mother with five children on welfare, Hamblin suggests "the conservative talk-show host becomes a lightning rod." Speaking with the authority of a man who's been there, the self-styled Black Avenger says, "My listeners know when their parks aren't safe. They know when they're being taxed to death."

Dennis Prager is among the most unconventional talk masters. He's the author of a widely read introduction to Judaism and a book on anti-Semitism, and is one of the most popular Jewish lecturers in the country. The focus of Prager's show (12 noon to 3 p.m. weekdays on KABC in Los Angeles) is values. "I open the show the same way every day: 'This is going to be a course in life.' We talk about everything except cooking, poetry, and architecture." Prager thinks the success of conservative broadcasters is related to conservatism's reliance on logic. "Liberalism is much more a feeling than a thought process. 'I feel bad about racism.' 'I feel bad about poverty.' You can't just emote for three hours a day; it's boring."

Another reason conservatives rule the airwaves, David Brudnoy believes, is their "great sense of humor." It tends to be the humor of the excluded, with a mordant quality. An increasingly alienated middle class can identify with this laughter from the outside that lampoons liberalism's objects of ritual veneration. Limbaugh's sense of humor is surely one of the secrets of his popularity. The man is a born satirist. Talk radio's latter-day Swifts often hit exposed nerves with their jests. When they do, the opposition howls with pain.

Another root of liberal resentment against talk radio is the fact that it is the one exception to their entrenched monopoly over the media. (The Internet may be in the process of becoming another.) Liberals set tone and policy everywhere else—at the major newspapers like the *New York Times, Washington Post,* and *Los Angeles Times;* at newsmagazines like *Time* and *Newsweek;* within network television (reflected in both news and entertainment programming); and in Hollywood. Some of the frustration of the mainstream media over talk radio is a longing for the good old days when the public heard only their voice, when they alone selected the topics for discussion and set the boundaries of debate, when they assigned the labels and had the exclusive concession on covering and analyzing the political process. They want their monopoly back.

Half a century of cultural hegemony has made the Left lazy and arrogant. It doesn't like being challenged, and despises being forced to debate or

Irving Kristol on the *Vox Populi*

"There is a comfortable symbiosis between our national newsmagazines, our half-dozen or so newspapers that claim national attention, and our national television networks. They are all liberal, more or less, and feel that they share the journalistic mission of 'enlightening' (as well as entertaining) the American public. They have tried, somewhat less than halfheartedly, to give 'representation' to the conservative viewpoint whenever they sense that this viewpoint has become popular. But they were utterly unprepared for the sudden emergence and swift rise of radio 'talk shows,' which now rival TV's daytime soap operas in popularity. These talk shows are overwhelmingly conservative in their politics and populist in their rhetoric—which is another way of saying that they are, more often than not, stridently conservative, vulgarly conservative, and not at all urbane or sophisticated.

"All of this happened without anyone planning it, or directing it, or even anticipating it. It was made possible by the federal structure of our polity and by the fact that there are well over a thousand local radio stations. Once a local program—that of Rush Limbaugh, for instance—becomes popular, other local stations, always eager for listeners, will rush to broadcast him. And if, for competitive reasons, they cannot do so, they will try hard to invent their own popular conservative talk shows. The owners of these stations are interested primarily in making some money, not in spreading any kind of liberal 'enlightenment.' And, given the near-absence of government regulation, the market works.

"In the United States, there is always a latent populist potential simply because the structure of our polity and of our economy makes it possible for the *vox populi* to find expression."

From "America's 'Exceptional Conservatism'" by Irving Kristol, in Neoconservatism: The Autobiography of an Idea.

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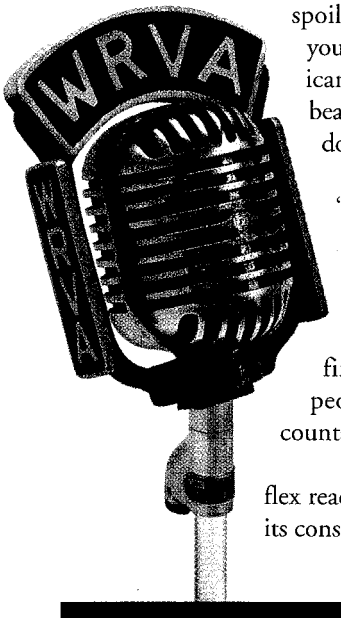
justify its positions. Meanwhile, intellectual dueling is the very essence of talk radio.

It's also a longstanding conceit of liberalism that it is the authentic voice of the people. Talk radio completely spoils this fantasy. Tune in any day, and you'll hear the opinions of ordinary Americans on these shows—views that don't bear much relation to those of the people dominating the mainstream media.



North puts it bluntly: liberals "hate what the American people are saying." They hate it even more "because they can't control it." Rosen believes that liberals shun accountability, and says talk radio "is the first effective platform that common people can utilize to hold liberals accountable for what they say and do."

Is liberal abuse of talk radio the reflex reaction of a political creed that is losing its constituency? Talk may simply be the convenient fall guy, due to its visibility, for a decades-long trend that has seen large segments of the American people peel themselves off from the liberal coalition.

Clearly, the liberal critique of talk radio reflects more than mere disagreement. "Rush Limbaugh…is a cretinous liar," splutters CNN's Peter Arnett. If radio talkers "ever got real power," warns left-wing poet Allen Ginsberg, the result would be "concentration camps and mass death."

There are certainly rough edges to talk radio, which in many ways is still in its infancy. Programs range from cogent and informative to banal and puerile. Hosts come in every shape and size—from the diligent and informative who can structure a floating conversation like a conductor waving his baton, to the screamers and out-and-out goof-balls. Listen long enough, and you'll hear both some occasional far-out stuff from callers, and lots of interesting and enlightening analysis.

Public opinion can be unsettling.

Limbaugh in the Ivory Tower

If you think Rush Limbaugh's listeners are found only in isolated truck stops, rural pool halls, and whitewashed churches with snake pens, think again. His admirers can even be found at Ground Zero of the intellectualoid class, Harvard University, where Harvey Mansfield, Jr., the William R. Kenan, Jr., Professor of Government, is an avid listener.

Writing in the highbrow British journal *Government and Opposition*, Prof. Mansfield cited Limbaugh along with Newt Gingrich and William Kristol as the three "stars" in the Republicans' 1994 success: "Republican leaders could find out what to say by listening to Rush…he has converted many, many waverers and legitimized conservatism as a doctrine of the people, not just of businessmen and intellectuals. The Democrats grind their teeth in frustration, having found no answer to his successful diatribes."

A former student of Mansfield tells how the famous historian of political philosophy—whose credits include translations of Niccolò Machiavelli and seminal works on the Constitution—began taping the Limbaugh TV show after losing too much sleep staying up late to watch it.

Nor is Mansfield alone in academe. James Schall, a Jesuit priest and professor of government at Georgetown University, admits he often schedules his day around Rush's radio show. "Rush Limbaugh is a man of good humor and good sense who has not been educated out of his capacity to see things as they are," says Schall, whose usual musings involve classical and medieval political theorists like Aristotle and Augustine.

Another student of Rush and Thomas Aquinas is Russell Hittinger. A professor of philosophy at the Catholic University of America and an adjunct research fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, Hittinger relished the prospect of a long drive the day after the 1992 elections because it meant hearing all three hours of Rush's celebration. Hittinger worries, however, that Rush is becoming too professorial of late: "I like the spoofs and songs better than the lectures," he says, "I hear too many academic ones as it is."

Daniel J. Mahoney, chairman of the department of politics at Assumption College in Worcester, Massachusetts, agrees. He loves Rush's sarcastic animal-rights and condom-distribution updates (accompanied by the song lyrics "up, up, and away in my beautiful balloon"). Best known for his work on French political theorists, Mahoney worries that the threatened return of the Federal Communication Commission's "fairness doctrine" would discourage broadcasts of Limbaugh and his imitators, a "typical manifestation of a kind of totalitarian liberalism that limits liberty and undermines real diversity."

Adding that not all of his leftish colleagues are close-minded, Mahoney recalls the time he pulled alongside an English professor friend at a red light. "She was very agitated, and when I asked what was irritating her, she said, 'I'm listening to Rush!'" As Harvey Mansfield summarizes, "Gifted with a motor mouth and a fine sense of emphasis, he is a compelling presence even if you cannot abide him."

None of these erudite academics expects to see a left-wing competitor challenge Rush for king of the radio hill. "Contemptuous liberals with hang-ups about identity just don't have senses of humor," Mahoney explains.

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The Return of Partisan Journalism

Anyone who raises the proposition that today's media are mostly partisan must gird himself for a barrage of protests from journalists. "We are not, have not been, never will be, partisan," they will bark. They will concede that there once was a partisan press, in the evil days of Republican press lords like Henry Luce and Colonel McCormick and William Randolph Hearst. But it will be said that today's media—led by national giants like the *New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post,* ABC, NBC, and CBS—are scrupulously objective.

This is nonsense. And the most honest journalists acknowledge as much. Famed columnist Walter Lippmann understood that pure objectivity was impossible: "The truth is that in our world the facts are infinitely many, and that no reporter can collect them all, and that no newspaper could print them all...and nobody could read them all. We have to select some facts rather than others, and in doing that we are using not only our legs but our selective judgment of what is interesting or important or both." *Washington Post* political reporter David Broder notes that "Our range of vision is limited by the bureaucratic definitions of our beats, by the perceptions of what is news, and by ingrained values and biases that shape the way in which we see the world." Or as journalism professor Mitchell Stephens explains, "As they tell their stories, all journalists are encumbered with belief systems, social positions, workaday routines, and professional obligations—all of which affect their selection and presentation of facts."

Recognizing the impossibility of complete objectivity, newspapers openly acknowledged and defended their partisan positions throughout most of American history. Newspapers subsidized by Andrew Jackson's Democrats and Henry Clay's Whigs were reliable supporters of those parties. In time, newspapers became ideological forces in their own right. Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune* became a national publication as the guiding voice of one wing of the Republican party. William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer developed yellow journalism as explicit supporters of the Democratic party. Hearst was elected to Congress as a Democrat, and was the Democratic nominee for governor of New York in 1906. Had he been elected, his next move would surely have been to run for president. Henry Luce, the founder of *Time,* became a leading force in Republican politics: Wendell Willkie's campaign for the Republican presidential nomination was first sparked by a July 1939 cover story in *Time,* and was managed by *Fortune* editor Russell Davenport.

By Michael Barone

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The high tide of partisan media may have been in New York in the 1920s, when the city had more than a dozen daily newspapers, each targeted at a different ethnic and partisan niche. The new tabloids—Captain Joseph Patterson's *Daily News,* and Hearst's *Daily Mirror,* with their screaming headlines and big pictures—were aimed at the masses of Irish, Italian, and Jewish immigrants. The *Herald Tribune* was for Anglo-Saxon Republicans. The *New York Times,* with its seeming independence from both political parties, was the favorite of upscale German Jews, who were diffident toward both WASPy Republicans and Tammany Democrats. Pulitzer's *World* was aimed at Protestant Democrats, Hearst's *Journal and American* at Catholic Democrats. Yet to come were the tabloid *Post,* targeting Democratic Eastern European Jews, and *PM,* directed to Jewish left-wingers. No one read all of these newspapers; who would have time? People picked up the one whose coverage seemed to make the most sense of the world for them. Everyone expected their paper to be partisan.

What is odd is not that mainline journalism has today become partisan again, but that for a long time it could plausibly claim to be objective. One big reason for the "objective" interlude was structural. The movies and new radio networks of the 1930s and '40s, and the television networks that followed in the 1950s, couldn't support themselves on thin market segments like the New York newspapers of the 1920s. So they aimed to please everyone. In a nation split fairly evenly between Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives, broadcasts aiming for large audiences had a strong commercial incentive to be perceived as nonpartisan. Moreover, broadcast licenses were allocated by the government and could be revoked if the station irritated the wrong party (see the article by Tom West later in this issue). In those circumstances, broadcast journalists foreswore partisan tilts, and this same attitude soon spread to newspapers.

Today the claims to objectivity of the mainline press are laughable. True, many reporters and editors produce fair-minded work, and the bias of the press does not work reliably in any one direction. But there is tilt present for all to see—heading in just the directions you would expect from newsrooms staffed by very large majorities of Democrats, cultural liberals, and feminists. Mainline journalism is by no means reliably pro-Democratic, as Clinton White House staffers will attest, but it is reliably anti-Republican. The Center for Media and Public Affairs documented that in the fall 1994 campaigns the three major networks gave Newt Gingrich 100 percent negative coverage. The major media outlets are fairly open-minded on economics, open even to some criticism of the welfare state, but overwhelmingly pro-choice on abortion and pro-feminist in general. Witness, for example, the breathtakingly one-sided coverage of Anita Hill's charges against Clarence Thomas.

Michael Barone, a senior writer for U.S. News & World Report, *is co-author of* The Almanac of American Politics.

Newsroom culture is becoming increasingly monopartisan and monocultural–even as it preens itself on its "diversity" and "openness."

But while respectful to the point of slavishness to the feminist Left, mainstream media organs tend to deride religious conservatives to the point of caricature. Even though the large majority of Americans are believing Christians (and voters split more sharply on lines of religion than any other demographic factor), few journalists are believers of any sort. David Broder admits that the irreligiosity of reporters "tilts our coverage." Recall how Broder's own *Washington Post* blithely characterized the Christian Right as poor, uneducated, and easily led. Anyone who knows Robert Kaiser, the number-two editor on the paper, who top-edited the article in question, will not be surprised that he found the statement unexceptionable. At some point the appropriate response to such bias is not protest but laughter.

This leftward (or, better, anti-Right) partisan tilt is enforced not so much by conscious effort as by a newsroom culture that is becoming increasingly monopartisan and monocultural—even as it preens itself on its "diversity" and "openness." In most newsrooms there are simply too few Republicans, too few believing Christians, and so forth, to intelligently explore the views held by such Americans. As managers seek a more superficial facial diversity of women, blacks, Hispanics, Asians, Native Americans, Eskimos, Aleuts, and Pacific Islanders—rather than a true variety of different viewpoints—newsroom cultures move farther left every year. On any suburban street in America you will find plenty of people who vote for Democrats and Republicans and are happy to tell you why. But in most newsrooms those few who vote Republican tend to keep their mouths shut, while those who vote Democratic smugly continue to assume that every decent, thinking person does the same. (I am happy to report that at *U.S. News & World Report,* where I work, there is a critical mass of both Republican and Democratic perspectives on staff, and I think that improves our magazine in general and my work as a political writer in particular.)

What should be done about this heavy imbalance within the media? One answer is to accept partisanship, expand the viewpoints to more accurately reflect the nation as a whole, and then sit back and enjoy it. As the mainline media have grown Left-partisan, guerilla Right-partisan media have risen in response. This development is often attributed to new technology, and indeed cable TV and the Internet have opened up new outlets for many previously unheard points of view. But the most successful Right-partisan communication of all has come through some old, even antiquated, technology: Newt Gingrich reaches his fans through a printed book, a medium that dates back to 1456. (The non-fiction bestseller lists have become a kind of conservative underground over the last decade.) And Rush Limbaugh talks to his audience on AM radio, which dates back to 1920.

Partisan journalism can be good journalism. It is indeed the norm in other countries, and produces plenty of excellent reporting and analysis: Britain's *Telegraph* and *Times* are Conserva-

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tive papers, the *Guardian* leans toward Labour. France's *Le Monde* is *gauche, Figaro* is *droit.* And in America, too, partisan journalism is often first-rate—accurate, intellectually serious, stylishly carried off. Witness the unacknowledged partisanship practiced by today's mainline organs, or the acknowledged partisanship of numerous high-caliber magazines, papers, and broadcasts on the Right, plus a few on the Left. To many readers and viewers, these outlets actually aren't perceived as partisan at all, just as accurate and truthful. The paper or broadcast is telling it like it is for most of its audience.

One response is to accept partisanship, expand the viewpoints to more accurately reflect the nation as a whole, and then sit back and enjoy it.

Of course not everyone is pleased. A partisan newspaper or newscast will, sooner or later, prove rasping for some portion of the universal audience. But then this is already happening; that's why we see the "East Berlin effect" of millions of Americans voting with their feet and fleeing the mainline media. In 1970, U.S. daily newspaper circulation was 62 million. By 1994 it had slipped to 60 million, even though the number of households had simultaneously risen from 63 to 97 million. Network newscast viewership has plummeted even more sharply than the newspaper audience, peaking at 41 percent of all households in the 1980-81 season, and reaching 28 percent in 1994-95.

Admittedly, there is more behind these trends than just the East Berlin effect. Young people who grew up watching television and not learning to read well are naturally less interested in newspapers. Television viewers who had only five or six stations to choose from in the 1970s but now have 50 or more choices on cable, plus thousands of videos for rent at Blockbuster, may find less time for Peter Jennings. But the left-wing partisanship of mainline media also explains some of the American public's alienation from our traditional media, and their growing interest in untraditional media.

When I made this last point on CNN's "Reliable Sources" recently, I was astonished to be shouted down in a barrage of protests from the other panelists—Howard Kurtz of the *Washington Post,* Ellen Hume, formerly of the *Wall Street Journal,* and Bernard Kalb, formerly of CBS News. They all assured me that not one jot or tittle of newspaper circulation losses or network viewership decline could be explained by any leftish bias or partisan tilt. The fury of their denials, however, convinced me I was on to something.

The great fear of liberal reporters in this area is that the owners of mainline media may decide to interfere with the newsroom cultures that in the past they have assiduously left alone. Right now such intervention appears unlikely. Network executives concerned over tanking newscast viewership have responded by cutting costs, not by bringing in new points of view. Newspaper owners show less worry over flat or declining circulation than they do about the possibility that new media might make Want Ads or supermarket fliers obsolete. They seem to believe that partisan imbalances can be papered over by offering more sports, lifestyle, and finance coverage.

They may be right. But if I owned a broadcast news network, I would wonder why I was competing with two or three others for the approximately one-half of all Americans leaning toward the left side of the political spectrum, while leaving entirely open the audience of approximately half of all Americans favoring the Right. I would move my headquarters out of the west side of Manhattan to some Middle American site like Grapevine, Texas—a perfect name, and right near the Dallas-Fort Worth regional airport. The employees who could not bear to leave Manhattan for Dallas-Fort Worth are just the kind of people I would happily be rid of. It is no accident that CNN produces the least left-tilted news of the four major U.S. networks, even though it has by far the most leftish owner. With his headquarters in Atlanta, most of Ted Turner's employees live in neighborhoods where both Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives, are represented—which is not something you can say about New York or Washington, D.C.

In the same way, if I owned a newspaper, I would wonder whether giving free rein to a newsroom culture that pushes the journalistic product farther and farther to the left is a good idea. To some extent, owners already try to address this problem by odd attempts at "balance." While most newspaper editorial pages are liberal, the out-of-town columnists brought in for contrast are frequently conservatives. The overall culture of newsrooms, however, keeps heading further left.

If journalism's reputation for liberalism, combined with the industry's drive for "multicultural" hiring, keeps driving away conservatives and attracting liberals, there will soon be problems. Problems with the quality and accuracy of news coverage, and problems with audience rebellion.

I will not be surprised if in perhaps a dozen years the owners of our mass media may finally have to take on the newsroom cultures—just as in the 1970s and 1980s they took on craft unions, and for the same reason: to prevent the destruction of otherwise exceedingly valuable financial assets. That would mean installing tough, objective-minded editors, like A.M. Rosenthal, who kept the *New York Times'* news pages mostly objective for two decades over the vociferous opposition of the newsroom culture. And it would mean taking affirmative actions to hire Republicans, conservative Christians, and others now vastly underrepresented in newsrooms.

Partisan journalism can be good journalism. It must admit its partisanship, however, and quit making increasingly implausible claims of objectivity. On the other hand, partisan journalism, especially of today's leftish variety, may not be good business for metropolitan newspapers and broadcast news that aim for a broad audience. Will the bottom line and the front page soon collide?

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Modern Celebrity Journalism is Born

Edward R. Murrow with Charles Collingwood (ctr), and Eric Sevareid (r.).

By Stanley Cloud & Lynne Olson

Between the 1920s (when "yellow journalism" declined) and the 1960s (when the "new journalism" began), public support of journalists rose steadily. Over the past decade or so, however, general opinion of the press has taken a nose-dive.

There are many explanations for this, but much of the blame must go to the corrupting effects of commercial television. In the past, reporters were much like other Americans—a little more curious, perhaps, maybe a little luckier in the kind of work they did. But their pay was hardly lavish. The big bucks in journalism tended to go to the publishers and executives. The working stiffs in the newsroom got by on scraps.

Not so in TV news (or for that matter among today's more prominent print journalists). Despite cutbacks in news budgets, TV anchors, correspondents, producers, and local news "personalities" are paid on a scale so lavish that it undercuts their on-camera pose as ordinary people speaking to, and for, ordinary people. It is thus not surprising that average Americans, who get most of their news from TV, think of top journalists today as "elitists" hopelessly out of touch with middle-class life.

Modern celebrity journalism was born, like many other aspects of our modern era, during World War II. Edward R. Murrow and the correspondents he oversaw for CBS during the war, collectively known as "the Murrow Boys," were the first reporters to achieve fame in broadcast journalism. They included Eric Sevareid, Charles Collingwood, William L. Shirer, Howard K. Smith, Richard C. Hottelet, Winston Burdett, Bill Downs, Larry LeSueur and Cecil Brown. These were the patron saints of electronic reporting, and in their brilliant careers can be found many early warning signs of the dangers posed by superstar journalism.

All of these correspondents had first worked in print (except for Murrow himself, who had no journalism experience whatever before CBS sent him to London in 1937), and were well-grounded in the tradition of reportorial anonymity that existed at the time. Murrow and his Boys soon discovered, however, that the impact and reach of radio exceeded anything they had ever known as reporters for newspapers or wire services.

The first time Eric Sevareid first truly grasped this was on a warm fall New York afternoon in 1940. He had just returned to the United States after covering the early stages of World War II, including the fall of Paris, the Battle of Britain, and the London Blitz. Standing on a street corner in Manhattan waiting for the light to change, he suddenly heard the voice of Larry LeSueur, one of his CBS London colleagues, echoing through the skyscraper canyons.

After a moment's confusion, according to his autobiography, Sevareid understood: LeSueur's voice was pouring out of the open windows of every radio-equipped car and taxi in New York. Until then, Sevareid had considered radio to be just "a pantomime in an empty room." You sat in some dank and windowless little studio in London or Paris, spoke into a microphone, and your words vanished into thin air. But now, standing on that Manhattan street corner, Sevareid realized that people were listening. Millions of them! Every day! Standing there, he wanted

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to shout back to London: They're out here boys! They can hear you! The potential influence and glamour of his position sunk in.

Just three years after heading off to Europe as a green, 25-year-old kid from Velva, North Dakota, radio had made Sevareid a celebrity—hounded by other reporters, toasted in nightclubs, mentioned in gossip columns. Like any star journalist today, Sevareid hired agents, went on the lecture circuit, and was exhibited at cocktail parties and teas. He tried (unsuccessfully) to write a play, and submitted a movie "treatment" to Warner Brothers. Handsome but painfully shy, he was pleased to discover that women other than his wife were eager to share his company.

Others of the Murrow Boys had similar experiences. Thanks to his "This-is-London" broadcasts during the Blitz, Murrow himself became internationally famous, counting prime ministers, cabinet officers, generals, and presidents among his friends. William Shirer, who had been covering the Nazis' rise to national and international power from Berlin, returned home in 1940 and learned the same lesson Sevareid had about the difference between doing good and doing well. He wrote a non-fiction book, *Berlin Diary,* which became an instant best-seller, and won his own CBS program of news commentary, finding himself a darling of Manhattan society. Although Shirer, whose later books included *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich,* is most often remembered as an ace war correspondent, the fact is he covered World War II for a total of less than two years before discovering the joys of mass popularity back home. From 1940 to 1945, he never returned to the combat zone for more than a few days at a time.

As with their media successors in the 1990s, power and fame sometimes fed the vanities and personal peccadillos of the Murrow Boys. Charles Collingwood, a first-rate reporter, took to floating among the glitterati, married a movie actress, and gambled and drank heavily. Both he and his wife ended their days as deeply saddened alcoholics. Ed Murrow and Bill Shirer started out as once-in-a-lifetime best friends, but after the war fell into a titanic, jealous quarrel that lasted until the end of their lives—to Murrow's great regret.

The fame enjoyed by the Murrow Boys was to a considerable degree justified by the extraordinary quality of the work they did. LeSueur spent an entire year in the Soviet Union covering the Eastern Front, and was in the second wave to hit Utah Beach on D-Day. Sevareid and Richard C. Hottelet had to parachute from crippled aircraft. Murrow was among the first to report the conditions found by Allied troops in the Buchenwald death camp. They almost always broadcast live (albeit from scripts they carefully wrote beforehand), inventing on the fly standards of quality that have rarely been equaled since.

So the problem wasn't that the Murrow Boys were undeserving of the intense celebrity radio conferred on them. The problem was that celebrity helped blur the already thin line between news and entertainment. The Boys expressed certain misgivings about this, but most of them became addicted to the medium's star-making power." "Spoiled we were," said Eric Sevareid many years later, "by the privilege of the microphone, the pay, the quick notoriety; a few rotten spoiled, but only a few."

Though they didn't realize it, the Murrow Boys were careening into a future that would spell their professional doom, and the name of that future was television. For a few years after the war, radio continued to dominate news broadcasting. Between 1948 and 1952, however, television completely took over, and the thin line between news and entertainment became thinner still. Murrow and the Boys saw the dangers. They hated and feared TV, with its increasing reliance on pictures instead of words, its heavy and intrusive equipment, its extraordinary costs, its showbiz trappings. They could see that in television, what did and did not get on the air was more often determined by behind-the-camera producers than by the reporters who covered the story. At one point Murrow grumbled that he wished "television had never been invented."

Soon, however, Murrow and most of his team adapted. They realized—as do print journalists who participate in shouting-match TV shows today—that without TV a modern journalist will rarely achieve great fame. Murrow, Sevareid, Charles Collingwood, and Howard K. Smith were especially successful on TV. Murrow even allowed himself to become host of a lighter-than-air celebrity interview show, "Person to Person," which made him rich but added nothing to his journalistic reputation.

To some degree, the money, perquisites, and fame of television troubled all of the Murrow Boys, but they probably troubled Sevareid most of all. A radical leftist during his days at the University of Minnesota during the 1930s, Sevareid agonized over what he saw happening to broadcast journalism. During the war, he once expressed ethical doubts about the extra "fees" paid by sponsors to broadcast journalists. "You'll get used to it," Murrow said. And get used to it Sevareid surely did. He died quite well off in 1992, but it bothered him that his career hadn't lasted long enough for him to enjoy the multimillions of a Peter Jennings or a Dan Rather.

Today, it is virtually impossible for a TV celebrity-journalist, beset by autograph-seekers and paparazzi, to go out and "cover" a story without changing the very nature of that story. The reason top TV journalists are paid like entertainers is because more and more they *are* essentially entertainers. The public has reacted accordingly. And it all began with Murrow and the Boys back at the birth of the modern news era—great journalists who made a pact with the devil and lived to regret it. Or did they? For all their complaints about the burdens of celebrity, they loved the attention they received. Some of them may not have understood how much they loved it until they had lost it.

After Sevareid's retirement from CBS, he had lunch one day at the Harvard Club in New York with the network's former president, Frank Stanton. When they were seated at their table, Stanton noticed that Sevareid seemed glum. "Is something wrong?" he asked. "I walked through this whole damn room," said Sevareid, "and nobody recognized me."

Stanley Cloud and Lynne Olson are authors of The Murrow Boys, *forthcoming from Houghton Mifflin. Cloud was formerly Washington bureau chief for* Time. *Olson, previously an Associated Press and* Baltimore Sun *correspondent, teaches journalism at The American University.*

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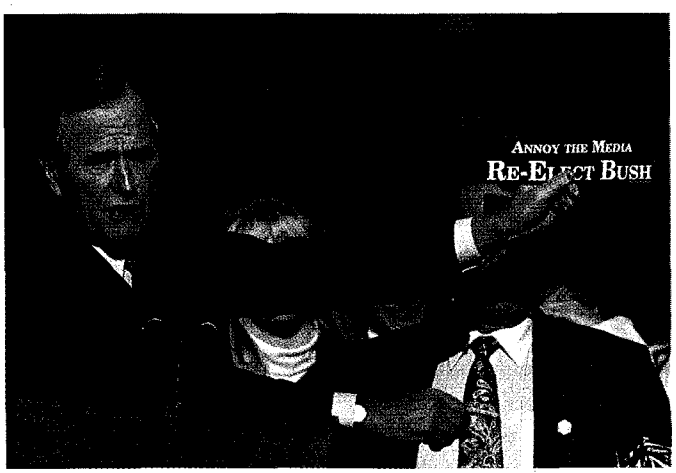

DOES TODAY'S NEWS MEDIA MANIPULATE HISTORY?

By L. Brent Bozell III

Shortly after the 1991 hearings for Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas, a *U.S. News & World Report* survey showed overwhelming public support for the judge. By a factor of three to one (60 vs. 20 percent) the public believed Thomas over his nemesis, Anita Hill.

One year later the story was quite different. A fresh *U.S. News* poll showed that support for Thomas and Hill had evened up at 38 percent each. The proportion of all men saying they believed Thomas dropped 25 points. Among women, half suddenly sided with Hill, compared to less than one in four at the conclusion of the hearings. Whereas the public had said 73 to 8 percent in 1991 that the Senate Judiciary Committee was fair to Anita Hill, one year later the margin had tumbled to 49 to 39 percent.

What had changed to sway public sentiment against Thomas and toward Hill? Had new evidence been revealed? Had additional witnesses surfaced? No. All that had transpired was a year's worth of negative press from journalists hell-bent on turning public opinion against Thomas.

"Given the detail and consistency of her testimony, it was almost inconceivable that Hill, rather than describing her own experiences, was fabricating the portrait of a sexual-harassment victim," wrote Jill Smolowe in *Time*. "America got to see what happens when one woman stands up to a man in an all-male tribunal," fulminated *Wall Street Journal* reporter Susan Faludi during an appearance on the *Today* show. CBS reporter Eric Engberg characterized Senator Arlen Specter as the man who "enraged many women during the Clarence Thomas hearings by attacking Anita Hill."

When repeated often enough these statements eventually, Orwell-like, entered the national consciousness as truth. And so history was literally re-written.

On Election Night, 1992, many reporters decided that the intolerant tone of the GOP convention in Houston had caused the Republican defeat. NBC's Tom Brokaw suggested to Pat Robertson that "There are many people in the Republican Party who believe that the Republican National Convention in Houston...was simply too extreme, too strident in its positions, and they cite your speech and Pat Buchanan's as well." CNN anchor Catherine Crier agreed: "We remember the convention in Houston, the Patrick Buchanans and the very conservative movement that took over—looks like it may have hurt the President." NBC's John Chancellor opined: "I think that the convention—and certainly all the polling data indicates this—offended a lot of women, offended a lot of people in the country who thought it was too religious and too hard-edged."

There was only one problem with this analysis. It wasn't true. Chancellor's reference to "all the polling data" ignored the CBS-commissioned exit poll released that very night which asked voters to choose from a list of things that helped them make up their minds about the election. As Ed Bradley reported, the conventions "fell at the bottom of the list." And what about "all the polling data" compiled during the Houston convention? Going into the event, polls had George Bush trailing Bill Clinton by 26 points. In two national surveys conducted during the convention, one (ABC/*Washington Post*) showed that Clinton's lead shrank to 9

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points, the other (*Houston Chronicle*) showed Bush pulling to within five points. Rather than an indelible stain on the Republican Party the convention was a resounding public-opinion success for the GOP.

What the media were reciting as fact were simply their personal reactions, and those of the liberal establishment, to the two national conventions. Content analysis of broadcast television coverage shows that on 118 different occasions, reporters from ABC, CBS, NBC, or CNN saw fit to label the Republicans in Houston as "conservative," "ultra right," "hard right," "far right," or worse. How many times did those same reporters pin the "liberal" descriptor on Bill Clinton, Al Gore, or the Democratic Party platform at their New York convention? Not once. In fact, all three were regularly called "moderate" and—believe it or not—"conservative." Nor were the terms "ultra-, hard-, or far left" ever used over four nights of air time.

THE AXIOM MANY REPORTERS NOW OPERATE BY IS: "VILIFY! VILIFY! SOME OF IT WILL ALWAYS STICK."

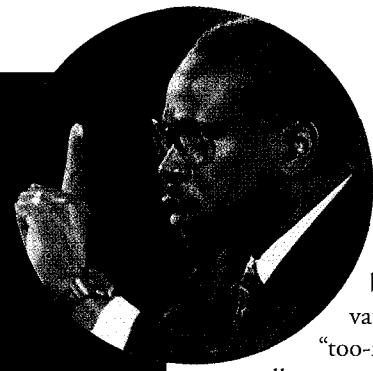

Photo credit: Rueters/Bettmann

Since 1992, the mainstream press has repeated the myth of the Houston "disaster" dozens upon dozens of times. Here's NBC/Mutual Radio's Bonnie Erbe in June 1994: "The Religious Right was widely denounced after the '92 Republican convention, which they took over and disgraced the party in many ways." And NBC's Katie Couric to Ralph Reed in February, 1995: "Mr. Reed, you must admit, though, that many moderate Republicans were turned off by the tone of the 1992 Republican convention." In June 1995, ABC's Jim Wooten stated that Senator Bob Dole would "like to avoid that description—extreme—perhaps remembering 1992 when the Republican family values convention and campaign attracted that label and helped put a Democrat in the White House." CNN's Frank Sesno informed listeners in August 1995 that "I was on the floor of the convention in 1992 when Pat Buchanan delivered that speech.... [It] sent shivers down the backs of many Republicans."

Again, this does not accord with the historical record. Ben Wattenberg, a Democrat and Clinton supporter but also an honest scholar of public opinion and elections, concludes in his new book that the conventional wisdom about the Houston Convention being an off-putting exercise in extremism is untrue. For example, "it is said by feminists and liberals, and echoed by [media] talking heads that Mrs. Quayle [in her convention speech] attacked single mothers, female-headed households, and working women. An examination of the text of her remarks shows that she did no such thing," notes Wattenberg. "I have reread the by-now infamous speeches," he concludes. "If that's the right wing, we are safe."

If family values weren't a losing issue for Bush after all, then why wasn't he re-elected? Survey evidence indicates two reasons. One was the perception that the economy was not healthy in 1992. A second factor was the public's frustration with Bush for breaking his pledge not to raise taxes. But of course emphasizing this would mean criticizing Bush for being insufficiently conservative, while pushing the "too-much-family-values" line allows one to pin the blame on too much conservatism. It's clear which course the media followed.

The "manipulating history" phenomenon is also at the heart of the current image troubles of the Republican congress. When the Contract with America was field-tested in the summer of 1994, every item enjoyed a 70 percent or better approval. Today the numbers are vastly different. Only 27 percent of the public believes the GOP program is "about right," while 47 percent believe they've "gone too far."

Are we to believe that Americans no longer want tax cuts, a balanced budget, federal spending brought under control, fewer regulatory excesses? Or is it that the public has been convinced that these things cannot be achieved without hurting the poor and elderly and damaging the environment, and that these initiatives will only help the rich? Certainly they have every reason to believe those things, for that is what the media have been reporting relentlessly for the past 18 months.

What have members of the press been saying about the Contract with America?

- It's a "legislative agenda to demolish or damage government aid programs, many of them designed to help children and the poor." (Dan Rather on CBS)
- If "you can't have more benefits, if you have children while you are on welfare, you're talking about putting children on the street who are hungry and naked, and that's a sin." (*Washington Post* reporter Juan Williams on CNN)
- "I think it will destroy the future competitiveness and security of the country, in terms of education, infrastructure, and medical practice as we know it today." (NPR's Nina Totenberg on TV's "Inside Washington")
- "This is some of the greatest redistribution of income I've ever seen—from the have-nots to the haves." (*Wall Street Journal* reporter Al Hunt on CNN)
- "Next week on ABC's World News Tonight, a series of reports about our environment which will tell you precisely what the new Congress has in mind: the most frontal assault on the environment in 25 years. Is this what the country wants?" (Peter Jennings)
- "Safe food, safe water, safe air, safe transportation. You have this protection now, but you might be about to lose it." (NBC Nightly News promo)
- "This is deregulation madness! We're gonna have dirty water, dirty air, OSHA regulations are being rolled back.... And the public isn't going to go along with this. They don't want *E. coli* bacteria in their drinking water." (*Time*'s Margaret Carlson on CNN)

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● "When NBC Nightly News continues: In Washington, if they cut food stamps, who doesn't eat?" (Tom Brokaw)

● "March madness has begun on Capitol Hill, and almost as predictable as a 'B' horror film, the slashing has begun. House Republicans have made a small down payment on their plan to make massive budget cuts." (Judy Woodruff on CNN)

● "Newtie has gone too far. When you take food out of the mouths of babes and claim it is in their best interests, as Gingrich did in defending his Draconian budget cuts, you cross the line from mere heartlessness to dangerous demagoguery....To advocates of a social Darwinism...only the strong deserve to live." (Robert Scheer in a *Los Angeles Times* column)

● "The Republican Jihad against the poor, the young, and the helpless rolls on. So far, no legislative assault has been too cruel, no budget cut too loathsome for the party that took control of Congress at the beginning of the year." (Bob Herbert in the *New York Times*)

● "The Democrats, the big mistake they've made is they ought to have advertisements about deterioration of quality, they ought to show an elderly person in a hospital bed, ringing for a nurse who doesn't show up." (*Newsweek* writer Eleanor Clift)

● "The Contract with America, if enacted, may be detrimental to the family.... Gingrich, given his history, may increase what I see as a new mean-spiritedness in this country.... I would like to think that the American people care about poor people, about sick people, about homeless people, and about poor children. I am shocked by the new mean-spiritedness." (ABC News anchor Carole Simpson on America Online)

This is what the American public are having drummed into them night after night. Will media partisans manage to reverse the public's appraisal of the Republican political platform of 1994? Time will tell. One thing, however, is clear—many reporters now operate by the axiom of French dramatist Pierre-Augustin Beaumarchais. "Vilify! Vilify!," he said. "Some of it will always stick."

L. Brent Bozell III is chairman of the Media Research Center.

PRESS BIAS IN THE '92 ELECTION

By Lynne Cheney

Ask Republican campaign professionals about press coverage of the 1992 election and you will tap a deep vein of resentment. "It was as if normal standards of journalistic objectivity went out the window," says James Cicconi, issues director for the Bush campaign. "The highest levels of skepticism were applied to everything that President Bush said, yet the Clinton camp could make the most outrageous assertions and the press accepted them as gospel. At times it was so frustrating I didn't know whether to throw things or cry. I can't even talk about it now without getting angry."

And it's not just Republican operatives who saw biased coverage in 1992. As the campaign was getting underway, Evan Thomas of *Newsweek* declared that "the Republicans are going to whack away at the press for the next couple of months as being pro-Clinton, and you know what? They're right. The press is pro-Clinton." During the fall, Howard Kurtz, media critic for the *Washington Post,* asked, "Has the press gone soft on Bill Clinton?" He noted that "a favorable tone sometimes creeps into the daily coverage," and cited an article in his own newspaper that labeled Clinton and Gore "New Heartthrobs of the Heartland." After the election, the *New York Times* cautiously observed that "Maybe the Media DID treat Bush a Bit Harshly." Jacob Weisberg of *The New Republic* was more direct: "Coverage of the campaign vindicated exactly what conservatives have been saying for years about liberal bias in the media."

One of the most important ways in which 1992 coverage was biased was in skewed reporting on the economy. Many journalists simply parroted the economic narrative constructed by the Clinton campaign. That narrative presented the 1980s as an era when (to use the words of a Clinton campaign document) "the rich cashed in...the forgotten middle class...took it on the chin...[and] the working poor had the door of opportunity slammed in their face." *Philadelphia Inquirer* reporter Alexis Moore complained of policies "putting selfish[ness] and greed ahead of the needs of us all." Mark Levinson described the 1980s in *Newsweek* as a "second Gilded Age—a time when, amid prosperity, many Americans became worse off." John Greenwald bantered in *Time* about an era when "the rich got bigger yachts, the middle class foundered, and many of the poor went under."

In addition to presenting a jaundiced view of the entire Reagan-Bush era, the press overdramatized the recession of 1991-92. In their book *Good Intentions Make Bad News,* S. Robert Lichter and Richard E. Noyes present a chart showing how negative press assessments of the economy were in July, August, and September of 1992. By this time, the recession had ended, but 94 percent of the evaluations on the network news in July were negative, 97 percent in August, and 98 percent in September.

The reporting on economic growth in the third quarter of 1992 was particularly outlandish. On October 27, government statisticians announced that the GDP had grown at an annual rate of 2.7 percent, a healthy pace. The *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* quoted Bush and his advisors trumpeting the figures as evidence the economy was on solid ground, and the Clinton camp downplaying the news. None of this was surprising, but the papers' selection of outside experts—to whom readers might be expected to turn to break the impasse of competing claims—certainly was. All of the quotes from outside authorities were negative. Typical was the comment by Donald Rataczjak of Georgia State University run by the *Post:* "Anyone who says that 2.7 is now our new growth rate is crazy."

NBC's Tom Brokaw described the 2.7 percent growth rate as "an economic number [President Bush] can brag about." But ABC's Peter Jennings described it as "more than economists had projected, but, in many cases, less than meets the eye." ABC correspondent Bob Jamieson declared that "many economists say the report is not proof the economy is taking a sharp turn for the better." CBS's Dan Rather introduced the official statistical release by saying, "There is some doubt about the accuracy of the figures."

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CBS correspondent Susan Spencer reported that "some economists warned that rate may not hold." CBS took up the subject again the next evening, with correspondent Eric Engberg debunking the 2.7 number and declaring that for most voters "the highest of the measurable economic indicators is anxiety."

Within weeks, all of these news organizations would be reporting that the growth rate had actually been stronger than 2.7 percent. Revising its estimate upward, the Commerce Department announced that the economy had actually expanded at a 3.9 percent rate during the third quarter. But of course by then the election had been decided.

Many contemporary journalists have concluded that seizing the agenda of political campaigns away from the candidates constitutes good reporting. And journalists are now in a very powerful position to construct the campaign narratives they prefer. From 1968 to 1992, the average soundbite for a candidate on the network news plummeted from 42 seconds to 8 seconds. Meanwhile the proportion of the news taken up by comments from the reporters rose to 71 percent, with candidates sharing the remainder of the time with voters and political experts. A study of the *New York Times* shows a similar trend in newspapers. From 1960 to 1992, the average continuous quotation or phrase from a candidate in a front page story fell from 14 to six lines. Reporters thus have increased power to turn the words and deeds of candidates into illustrative material for stories they want to tell.

This is made doubly worrisome by the fact that many journalists are openly giving up on efforts to achieve objectivity. Former *Washington Post* ombudsman Joann Byrd writes that journalists have recently "wised up and dismissed objectivity as a pretentious fantasy." Max Frankel insists in the *New York Times Magazine* that reporting "just the facts" can amount to "objective misrepresentation." Jon Katz, media critic for *Wired,* talks about objectivity as a "failed cult"—and immoral to boot.

It is possible to imagine a situation in which journalists dismiss objectivity as a goal and some semblance of balance nevertheless exists on the networks and in the major newspapers. But this would require a genuine diversity of political opinion in newsrooms, a situation that various surveys (most recently one conducted by the Freedom Forum) have shown does not exist. The members of today's prestige press corps are overwhelmingly liberal.

If today's reporters are freed from keeping their opinions in check, the result will almost certainly be coverage that favors more liberal candidates, as happened in the 1992 presidential race. When the *Washington Post's* ombudsman examined the pictures, headlines, and news stories that ran in her newspaper during the concluding 73 days of the 1992 campaign, she calculated that nearly five times as many were negative for Bush as for Clinton. "Fairness—which was supposed to substitute for objectivity—is, it turns out, a very subjective successor," she wrote with concern.

Still, there are signs of hope. The television talk-show format provides opportunities for relatively full portraits of candidates. Alternative media also offer promise. Some provide less heavily packaged and pre-digested glimpses of candidates. Others offer openly non-liberal counter-balance. Offerings like C-SPAN (where objectivity does seem to be the goal) and various conservative radio talk shows bring genuine diversity to the airwaves.

Also encouraging are the critiques of Bill Clinton that various members of the mainstream press have offered since he became President. Real concern for veracity has been shown by some reporters. If truth is becoming more of a concern to journalists, perhaps objectivity will as well.

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WILL AMERICANS TURN OFF A CRUSADING PRESS?

By S. Robert Lichter

In movies and fiction, reporters have traditionally been portrayed as hardbitten, blue-collar skeptics. The old cynicism of the ink-stained working-stiff newsman is a much more difficult pose, however, for today's media celebrities. While a generation ago, the term "media elite" would have sounded like an oxymoron, today's national journalists frequently make more money and wield more power than the news-makers they cover.

Increasingly, journalists see themselves as society's designated saviors—independent professionals who represent the public interest against special interests and the politicians who are beholden to them. As communications theorist Ted J. Smith III writes, "the press has assumed the position of...critic, not *of* the society but somehow *outside* and *above* it." Reporters feel a "special calling...not merely to serve society...but to save and perfect it."

If asked, "Who elected you?", these high-minded perfectionists have a stock answer: They are best qualified to uphold the public interest precisely *because* no one elected them. Their motives are unsullied by campaign promises and debts to constituencies. "We are America's ombudsmen," proclaims "60 Minutes" producer Don Hewitt proudly.

It is therefore a mistake to think of cynicism as today's major media vice (as is frequently argued). Studies of press treatment of advocacy groups like Common Cause and various environmental lobbies demonstrate dramatically how uncritical today's press can be toward its sacred cows. Far from being cynics, 1990s journalists can best be understood as romantic idealists.

Self-righteousness and moral sanctimony—hardly traits associated with cynicism—are prominent characteristics of today's news professionals. Contemporary journalists aren't hardbitten skeptics; instead, they cherish the notion that their own ideals are purer and higher than those of people in other social sectors like government or business. "We can spot sin, duplicity, and conflicts of interest in a politician in the dead of night from a hundred miles away. [But] when we look in mirrors, we are struck blind," notes *Washington Post* columnist Richard Harwood with some irony.

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Idealistic journalists are increasingly taking society's reins into their own hands. An example is the co-ordinated effort to "improve" election campaigns that sprang up after the 1988 Bush-Dukakis race. The 1988 elections caused immense dissatisfaction among reporters, with many believing that by balancing their stories they had failed to tell some deeper truth about the men who would be president. In 1992, they resolved to be more "truthful," armed with the conviction that they were acting on behalf of an abused electorate.

And so the media in 1992 boldly went where only editorials had gone before. News stories regularly contradicted the candidates in order to "keep them honest." Journalists threw off the constraints of "objectivity" and focused on their own issue priorities, intentionally subordinating the candidates' agendas. All this was done in the public's name, in order to make campaigns cleaner and more substantive, to aid voters by reporting which candidates were right and which were wrong.

Unfortunately, content analyses done by the Center for Media and Public Affairs show that this activist journalism failed to offer voters a more substantive campaign. In fact, systematic comparisons of campaign reporting with the candidates' actual speeches show that the candidates discussed concrete policy issues far more frequently and in greater detail than did either print or broadcast reports. News coverage not only remained negative, it became less balanced and more laden with commentary than it had been during the 1988 campaign.

Ross Perot was handled roughly, with his media image going from savior to psycho almost overnight, but the clearest victim of the new rules was George Bush. Throughout 1992, Bush received the worst press of any candidate, with more than 70 percent of his soundbites on network television news being negative. Over the same period, a majority of the comments about Bill Clinton were favorable. (This disparity was even greater in the major newspapers we studied.) In addition, Bush was plagued by the networks' insistently gloomy portrayal of the economy, in spite of statistical evidence to the contrary. A typical summary assessment was offered by NBC reporter Lisa Myers: "It's tough to lead when you don't know where you want to go. Call it a vision—George Bush doesn't seem to have one."

Even as journalists congratulated themselves for their new activist stance, angry candidates and dissatisfied citizens fled the traditional media for talk shows—to exchange views and information about the nation's problems directly with each other. Journalists' efforts to assume a greater voice in the campaign increased concern about the impartiality and seriousness of the press.

Activist reporters provided more mediation and intrusion at a time when the public wanted more direct communication with their elected leaders. Instead of changing the system, the mainstream media thus became closely identified with it. As they fired away at the ads and campaign conduct of the candidates in 1992, reporters took that much more time away from the issues, and added that much more negativity to the campaign process.

Yet, the new aggressiveness adopted by leading news organizations has persisted since 1992. Unlike other chief executives, President Clinton enjoyed no media "honeymoon" upon taking office. During his first two years in office, our studies show that he was subjected to three times as much criticism as praise on the network evening news shows.

Moreover, the national media's coverage of the 1994 midterm election campaign was even more superficial than in 1992. Our studies found that barely one out of five network news assessments of the candidates focused on the substance of their records or proposals. More than half concerned "horse race" questions. This happened even though Republicans presented a substantive and detailed legislative platform in the form of the Contract for America. The fact that the most positive coverage (according to our studies) went to three old-school incumbents—New York Governor Mario Cuomo, Texas Governor Ann Richards, and Massachusetts Senator Edward Kennedy—suggests that today's mainline press is less a critic of the establishment than a part of it.

IN REPORTS ON THE FIRST 100 DAYS OF THE NEW REPUBLICAN CONGRESS, OUR STUDIES SHOW, THE NATIONAL MEDIA FOCUSED ON COMPLAINTS AND CRITICISM IN OVER TWO-THIRDS OF ALL CASES.

The ambitious "First 100 Days" agenda of the Republican 104th Congress received heavily negative media coverage. In over two-thirds of all reports, our studies show, the national media (print and broadcast alike) focused on complaints and criticism. The hostile coverage was mirrored by even more negative editorials. Newt Gingrich discovered how deeply the media spotlight can sear, just as George Bush and Bill Clinton had earlier.

The national media have grabbed for themselves the lead role in the game of politics. They've done this without any responsibility for governing, and without any guiding philosophy other than challenging all comers and letting reporters follow their instincts for "fairness." Though surveys that show large majorities of Americans now regard the media as biased, intrusive, out of touch with ordinary people, and an obstacle to social betterment, the elite press remains committed to "purifying" politics. After the 1992 elections, the president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors declared that "the country owes us a debt for a job well done." Major news organizations are forging ahead with plans for more subjective "truth squad" reporting in 1996.

The media's increasingly visible stage-management of public life has identified the press ever more closely with the political establishments that voters are rejecting. In reaction, audiences in a rapidly expanding information marketplace are fleeing to less manipulative venues—ranging from talk radio to on-line news and political chat groups. In their rush to promote the politics of virtue, today's mainstream media run the risk of becoming tomorrow's media backwater.

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Mass Media Wars

LA Versus NYC

By Joel Kotkin

To many observers, Hollywood and Manhattan are just two faces of a single creature—the not-especially-wholesome organism that produces America's popular culture. Yet behind some superficial similarities there exists a serious clash between the two locales. New York and Los Angeles are separated today both by sharp business competition and by longstanding cultural conflict.

The friction between L.A. and New York reflects two profoundly different views of culture. For Angelenos, culture is seen primarily as a national and global business. "A product that sells is all that matters" in L.A., so that is what "the creative community" focuses on, says Phil Roman, a veteran animator whose North Hollywood-based company produces "Garfield" and "The Simpsons." In New York, culture has long meant "the arts," plus a news media establishment that is essentially non-profit (the New York-based news divisions of the national TV networks, for instance, have long been viewed as "public services" to be subsidized by other earnings).

There are also vast differences in the productive capacity of the two regions. New York remains the center for entertainment finance, media marketing, communications, and the fine arts, while Los Angeles houses all the major studios, employs nearly five times as many people in its film industry, and boasts nearly seven times as much soundstage space. Last year, 60 percent of all the nation's film starts took place in L.A., compared to less than ten percent in New York.

Entertainment is one of today's fastest growing job sectors. Employment in film and television production jumped 20 percent last year—adding some 27,000 jobs in Southern California alone. California's hegemony in entertainment, however, is under challenge from Gotham.

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Both regions see entertainment-related industries as critical to their economic futures. The Los Angeles area lost over 140,000 defense and aerospace jobs in the early 1990s, making expansion of show business employment critical to regional recovery. Corporate bureaucracies, an important part of New York's economy, have likewise been shrinking. With unemployment and real estate vacancy rates well above the national average in both New York and L.A., local officials have identified entertainment as a potential savior. After years of neglect, Southern California politicians, led by Los Angeles Republican Mayor Richard Riordan, have begun to court the entertainment industry. One recent result: a massive deal which will see the Dreamworks partnership build the first totally new movie studio in nearly half a century—in west Los Angeles. Meanwhile, Rudy Giuliani, New York's Republican mayor, has launched a campaign to boost Manhattan's position as a "New Hollywood" or "Silicon Island" poised to dominate the emerging world of multimedia communications (as some press articles have lately maintained).

New York and Los Angeles are separated today both by sharp business competition and by longstanding cultural conflict.

Unable to compete, like other regions, on the basis of cost-efficiency, New York has seized on Southern California's highly visible misfortunes—the 1992 riots, the 1994 earthquake, even the O.J. trial—to bolster its appeal as the preferred locale for the nation's creative elite. The traditional mantra about Los Angeles being a hollow, boring, craven place is in full flower. "L.A. has vast problems and has been in trouble for a long time," *New York* quotes one Manhattan publicist saying. "It's not just earthquakes. It's the vast emptiness."

This regional competition has a long history. In its early days, Los Angeles was little more than a sun-drenched colony for the predominantly Eastern creative establishment. High-end arts and publishing were firmly rooted in the East, and even as the movie business shifted from New York to the West Coast—driven by legal concerns and the abundance of light and varied locations in Los Angeles—the financial, distribution, and marketing decisions remained largely in the hands of New York-based "suits." But as the film industry grew in importance, the real power in entertainment began to shift from Manhattanites towards Los Angeles-based moguls, stars, and directors. Even financiers such as Joseph Kennedy, in a 1936 probe of then-distressed Paramount Studios, concluded that one major problem with the firm lay in over-supervision by the "business" side in New York.

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Los Angeles, in effect, became the Chicago of the entertainment world, the city that took Wall Street financing and carried out the manufacturing. Hollywood's role as production center spawned hundreds of specialized businesses and craftsmen in the region. In the beginning, many of Hollywood's artisans were leftists like their counterparts on Broadway and in the New York publishing industry. But the ultra-individualism of Hollywood soon tended to dilute ideology. The only "ism" that Hollywood readily embraced, noted Dorothy Parker, was plagiarism.

With the reaction against communism after World War II, Hollywood's loose leftist culture faded. While New York and Europe welcomed and sheltered many radicals, Hollywood's right-leaning moguls actively purged communists and fellow travelers. "You have to remember the times," recalls Republican Congressman Robert Dornan, himself a scion of an old show business family. "From 1941 to 1953 it was America against the Nazis. Against the communists. All the struggle—and the prosperity. A helicopter in every garage."

Lacking protection even from their own unions, the Hollywood Left either changed colors or fled town. Hollywood quickly shaped itself in the image of the new post-war America. Led by the likes of Walt Disney, Gary Cooper, Clark Gable, Adolphe Menjou, Barbara Stanwyck, and John Wayne—all members of the Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals—Hollywood tilted to the right.

Soon Hollywood faced its biggest challenge—the growth of home-based entertainment. Just as Broadway's Gilded Age impressarios missed the boat to the film business, the L.A. moguls initially ignored the potential represented by the emergence of broadcasting. New York-based entrepreneurs like William Paley, David Sarnoff, and others quickly consolidated their control of vast radio and television networks. When television emerged in the 1950s, it was centered not in Hollywood but in Manhattan. With a corner on the live TV business, plus publishing and the theater, New York began to retake the national crown for entertainment and media. As the movie-going public dropped from 90 million in 1946 to 47 million a decade later, Hollywood stagnated, and the "golden age of television" became also a golden age for Manhattan, where the bulk of the entertainment, news, advertising, and communications industries were clustered.

"New York had its grip on so many industries at that time," observes native New Yorker and former AT&T CFO Robert Kavner, now a Los Angeles-based telecommunications consultant. Yet by the 1960s, Hollywood was storming back. For one thing, Hollywood proved far more capable of adapting to mass

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tastes than New York, with its more high-brow and European-oriented culture. Using the "B-movie" format, Hollywood mass-produced westerns, sitcoms, and game shows to meet the voracious appetite of the new media.

Even though its climate was exotic, Los Angeles more accurately reflected, and comprehended, the tastes of the new suburban culture then forming in the U.S. than did the old urban centers. German-born producer Klaus Landsberg once described Los Angeles as "the biggest Midwestern town in the country," and this had everything to do with Hollywood's success. "Live TV died, and New York lost its production, largely because of a question of lifestyles," Landsberg observes. "The attitudes and culture in Los Angeles were different. We have always been a backyard society, one which could appeal to people all over the country. New York was more of an urban Italian and Jewish culture."

As entertainment television gradually centered in Hollywood, Los Angeles expanded its cultural role from mere movie capital to full-fledged alternative to Madison Avenue and Broadway as a cultural trendsetter. Recently, three new national television networks have begun forming (for the first time since the birth of ABC, NBC, and CBS), and all three—Fox, Warner Brothers, and Paramount—will be based primarily on Los Angeles studios rather than New York facilities.

s freakishly unrepresentative of America as Hollywood may seem, things actually could be a lot worse if more of the mass entertainment business were based in Manhattan.

Perhaps no event more clearly illustrates the current ascendency of Hollywood over New York than the acquisition last year of ABC by the Walt Disney Company. On a geographic level, this stunning move shifted control of the nation's leading television network from Manhattan to Burbank, California, Disney's home. In cultural terms, Burbank could not provide a starker contrast to Manhattan precincts. "This is small-town America in the middle of a big city," explains Bob Tague, the city's community development director.

Much like the midwestern states that have enjoyed a strong revival in the 1990s, Burbank survived to prosper by maintaining a fundamentally middle-American atmosphere. Pro-business to a fault, the city of 98,000 has decent schools and safe streets. Its sidewalks are clean, it has wiped out graffiti and spruced up its central area (the "beautiful downtown Burbank" of Johnny Carson's teasing) into a pleasant, mildly bustling shopping area. The results have been nothing short of spectacular. Over the past two years, the local Disney and Warner Brothers studios have each added upwards of a half-million square feet of space, including Disney's new animation center. Another 750,000 square feet of space has been populated by at least 30 small production, post-production, and media specialty companies. Future plans call for up to six million additional square feet from Disney and Warners.

Little Burbank by itself may now produce more visual entertainment product than the entire New York area. Although few stars live in the decidedly middle-class city, it does provide a home for thousands of specialty craftspeople, artists, and technicians who provide the critical "below the decks" production elements.

Until the 1990s, New York's elites grudingly accepted Hollywood's leading role in the "flaky" world of movie and television production. But as Southern California began taking on many functions as a core communications center, New Yorkers have become touchy about the competition in culture-based industries. A February 1995 *New York* cover story—"Goodbye L.A., Hello N.Y.C."—portrayed a veritable mass exodus of Hollywood celebrities to New York. The article breathlessly described Los Angeles as a kind of sun-drenched hell, and portrayed New York as the natural repository of national culture, humor, and film craftsmanship.

Although a few quake-shaken celebrities have moved to New York, most retain strong ties to Southern California. Jerry Seinfeld, whose move east put him on the *New York* cover, admitted to a disappointed *New York Times* reporter that his show would remain in Hollywood. New York experienced a genuine jump in film starts in 1994, rising to 73 from 43 the year before. But this compares to L.A.'s 1994 total of 439. L.A.'s 1994 *increase* in production alone was 116, larger than New York's *total* output. Seventy of the 90 prime-time network shows last year were based in Los Angeles.

The New York media "boom" of the 1990s represents less an ascendency than a recovery of production lost during the disastrous Dinkins years, notes Fred Siegel, an urban historian at Cooper Union. New York's 3,200 new jobs in film and television represent a nice antidote to long declines in New York's business climate. But it is important to realize that eight times as many new entertainment jobs were created over the same period of time in Los Angeles County.

New York City's attempt to claim leadership in the emerging multimedia industry reveals even more chutzpah. Gushy articles in *New York,* the *New York Times,* and *Business Week* touted the Big Apple as a "high tech boom town." "The cyber gold rush was supposed to happen in California," chortled *New York,* "but then less than a year ago, the cry of the high tech prospectors changed to 'go east young man.'" Never men-

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tioned in the story was the relative size of the Manhattan-based industry compared to its West Coast counterparts. Although New York has developed some significant players in the fledgling industry, it ranks far behind both Los Angeles and San Francisco, each of which has roughly three times as many multimedia firms and employees. Among the 500 fastest growing firms in the information industry, as measured by *Technology Transfer* magazine, "Silicon Island" boasted only three, and the entire Empire State only 11. In contrast, Los Angeles County had 14, while California as a whole totaled more than 150.

ollywood still reflects a more fundamentally American outlook—with middle-western, populist, and pro-family streaks much closer to the surface—than New York.

What does the New York vs. Los Angeles battle mean for Peoria? Is there any reason the rest of the nation should be interested in this competition? Perhaps. There may be long-term significance for the nation's cultural imagery. As freakishly unrepresentative of America as Hollywood may seem, things actually could be a lot worse if more of the mass entertainment business were based in Manhattan. Look at the cultural sectors where New York City does remain influential: Broadway and off-Broadway theater are now heavily dominated by gay themes. Publishing is distorted by trendy feminist, deconstructionist, and radical dogmas. PBS and the three network news divisions based in New York tend to be more P.C. than alternatives outside Manhattan like CNN. The fine arts are wracked by various nihilist philosophies, Euro-envy, and doctrinaire anti-capitalist sentiments, with the important shows like the Whitney Biennial degenerating into nipple-piercing, excrement framing, bourgeois-bashing, performance-art parodies of left-wing nuttiness.

For all its crassness (and granting that it harbors its own radicals and nihilists), Hollywood still reflects a more fundamentally American outlook—with middle-western, populist, and pro-family streaks much closer to the surface—than New York. Los Angeles may be an imperfect lotus land, but it still reflects the house-owning, barbecue eating, individualist ethos that characterizes most of this country reasonably well. That is why the region's best fantasy products often hit a popular nerve and appeal widely to the American public.

The political complexion of Hollywood, while wildly tilted to the left compared to most of the country, is nonetheless far less uniformly liberal than among New York counterparts. Indeed many of Hollywood's leading stars—Mel Gibson, Bruce Willis, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Tom Selleck, Charlton Heston—are well-known conservatives. Among the unknown cameramen, editors, business executives, and specialists are far more sensible, conservative folk. The film czar for the city of Los Angeles, Cody Cluff, is a practicing Mormon, as is the exective director of the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce. *Forrest Gump, The Lion King,* and "Home Improvement" are products of Hollywood as much as *Natural Born Killers,* "Roseanne," and *Showgirls.*

"Politics is not a make or break thing in Hollywood, speaking as a lefty myself," comments Jonathan Katz, founder of one of Hollywood's largest prop makers. "I don't think Hollywood really has politics—it's really a culture of opportunists, or, perjoratively, it's a culture that rewards opportunists." In contrast to the self-made, entrepreneurial nature of Los Angeles, Manhattan has an essentially Ivy League, elitist orientation. Its natural cultural proclivities are sometimes closer to the leftist fashions of Europe than to mainstream America. "In Paris or New York, it's a smaller world and pretty much hierachical," Katz notes. "The great thing about Los Angeles is that it's a totally permeable system—you can go from video store clerk to director. It's harder to do that in a place like New York."

If New York really were to retake control over the direction of America's mass culture in the future, it would mark the reversal of a decades-long pattern of decentralization of cultural, business, and scientific leadership. Not only California but other areas far from the traditional eastern core have benefitted from this shift. "Thirty years ago any art outside New York was considered regional," notes former Brooklyn Museum curator Jack Lane, a native Idahoan who is currently director of the new Museum of Modern Art in San Francisco. "Now you have other centers. There are opportunities for artists to develop and to be acknowledged without New York." Were the media, entertainment, and communications businesses to centralize in New York, a broader "Paris-izing" effect might occur, with artists, musicians, actors, and writers who now succeed in regional centers finding it necessary—simply to get noticed—to relocate to New York because it was the dominant intellectual, cultural, and business center, as in the early part of this century.

Hollywood, an artifice in the midst of the "great American desert," mixes the sacred and the profane, the great and awful aspects of American culture. Its artifacts are often tacky and vulgar, sometimes subtle and powerful. Whatever its warts, though, it is a tremendously varied, ever-changing capital, a broad blend of the peoples and perspectives occupying our vast continent.

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Amoral Hollywood

What's true on the screen is true behind it

I've watched a lot of gangster movies lately. The most recent was *The Usual Suspects,* a poorly written, semi-intelligible story about a group of criminals whose main occupation was saying "f––k," "f––king," and "f––k you" to each other, along with shooting each other in particularly bloody ways. Before that were *Get Shorty, Casino,* and *Money Train,* the last about a different sort of gangster. These films had in common a worshipful attitude towards criminals, a lot of foul language, pitiful looking people who turn out to be hardened murderers, and contempt for anything that might be considered human decency.

As I sat in the nearly empty theater watching *The Usual Suspects* and recalling those other movies (some of which I walked out of), I thought of the reply by Isaac Singer when asked about Hollywood. "Hollywood," he said, "is an insane asylum. A real one."

I also thought of the story of Constantine's Arch, one of my favorite tales of cultural decline. At some point, the mighty emperor Constantine won a great military victory and wanted (according to Gibbon) to commemorate it by building a triumphal arch, like the arches other conquering emperors had constructed throughout Rome. His royal contractors reported back to him that, alas, in all of Rome there were no longer artisans capable of doing the beautiful bas-reliefs and friezes that had once been the staple of triumphal arches. Resourceful Constantine told the contractors to just chisel some of the bas-reliefs off of his predecessors' arches and attach them to his. Similarly, the modern movie is so empty in terms of plot line, character, and scene that many of them seem to be no more than pasted-together versions of old movies, with a lot of blood, sex, and cursing tossed in.

Why are so many Hollywood movies rehashed tales of killers, crooks, and misfits of various kinds? Why is the small circle of friends who make the modern motion picture facsimile so enchanted by psycho criminals that it makes gangster movies again and again? What is it about the life of the sociopath that so charms Hollywood? I think I know, and I can tell you best by a series of little anecdotes that have happened to me in my two decades here. These tales could be added to indefinitely by other people I know. Please note: my experiences are actually not that bad by Hollywood standards.

By Benjamin J. Stein

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Let's start with a book I wrote in 1980 called *'Ludes.* It was a novel about some people I knew who had become addicted to Quaaludes, a fine sleeping pill but very addictive indeed. The book was my best writing effort ever. It was optioned for the movies at once. I wrote a screenplay, and then it was slightly rewritten. After that, the whole project lay fallow for many years. Eventually, a talented director took an interest in it. He joined with two friends, and they bought the rights, with my help. One of the three was also a writer. He rewrote my script, but very slightly, and by great tenacity the director got the movie made. (It was called *The Boost* and starred James Woods and Sean Young.)

Toward the end of the project, I discovered to my shock that the director wanted his pal's name on the credits as sole screenwriter, leaving me off altogether except as author of source material. I pleaded that this was wildly unreasonable—to no avail. I protested to the Writers' Guild, the union that arbitrates credit disputes. A member of the guild close to the people making the decision told me that they would not lift a finger to help Ben Stein, who had worked for the much-despised Richard Nixon. I ultimately didn't get screen credit for a movie that was overwhelmingly my work. It was the worst writing blow of my life and has negatively affected my whole Hollywood writing career since.

At about the same time, I wrote and published a short story about a Soviet takeover of America. I pitched it to a network, and it was bought for a miniseries. The project was given to a well-known TV writer to script. He wrote a very long teleplay. When the show came close to appearing on the TV screen, an official of the network gave interviews saying it was from an original idea by him. Not only that, but the scriptwriter refused to allow my name on the screen at all, even as author of the source material, because of my association with Nixon. When I protested, the network offered to pay me to humor the TV writer and keep my name off the screen. My alternative was to litigate against a major network, so I agreed. (At the time, there were only three networks; to anger one of them by litigation was considered foolhardy, even insane.)

Shortly thereafter I sold a story about the three martyred civil rights workers Goodman, Chaney, and Schwerner to a studio as the basis of a movie. I had as my partner in the project an Israeli woman. We worked for years—and she worked much more than I did—to get the thing made. Finally, it did get made as a TV movie, and a very good one. I wrote the story line and someone else wrote the script, and it was a killer. Just before air time my woman "partner" blithely told me that she was going to give herself the producer credit, and me only a trifling credit despite a contract clearly to the contrary, and that if I didn't like it, I could sue her. I did sue her and got my credit, but very little money.

Or I could tell you about the producer who simply stole a story in which we were partners and made it into a movie. I sued and got a pittance. And then watched the other fellow become a major star. Or I could tell you many similar stories.

Again, my stories are by no means unique, nor are they entirely due to my Republican connections—rarities in Hollywood, to put it mildly. These are commonplaces of how Hollywood does business. Dishonest and immoral behavior is endemic. The well-connected and powerful routinely steal from the less-well-connected and less powerful.

Lest this all seem like sour grapes, let me say that my own career here has turned out to be rather good—because while I have been stunningly mistreated as a writer, I have been treated better than I deserve as an actor. Perhaps it all balances out. But my experiences make a point about the larger culture of Hollywood: The artifacts of people tend to have some connection with the personalities of those who make them. The simple, spare, useful furniture of the Shakers tells us something of their state of mind. The magnificent elegance of the Constitution tells us about the beautiful soul that was James Madison.

Likewise, the amoral gangster movies that pour out of Hollywood tell us something about the people who make up Hollywood. In brief, they are people who follow the adage of Louis "Lepkele" Buchalter concerning fairness. When asked why he was such a chronic thief, the founder of Murder, Inc., said simply, "You have arms, you take." (At least he said that in the movie.)

The people who make pop culture in Hollywood are usually small personalities who never do anything really brave like serving in combat or working as a cop, but who would like to think of themselves as tough guys. So they do "tough" things to people more trusting than they are, and create gangsters on screen through whom they can vicariously swagger. Hollywood is not just a mental hospital, as Singer said. It's a mental hospital run by the inmates—all too often men and women with an irrational compulsion to cheat, steal, and lie.

Hollywood has some decent people. Norman Lear, Al Burton, John Hughes, Ivan Reitman, Ron Meyer, Jeffrey Katzenberg, Michael Eisner, Michael Chinch, Gary Salt—these are some of the powerful yet kind people I have encountered here. But they are rare indeed.

Could it possibly be that the Hollywood product is not affected by the kind of people who make it? Not likely. "People are policy" goes the Washington adage. "People are pictures" one might say about Hollywood. The dishonest, bullying, thieving, gangster mentality of many Hollywood players today finds its artifact on the screen. Amoral folks make movies, TV shows, and music elevating the kind of people they are.

Hollywood used to put out more wholesome fare. How did Ozzie and Harriet turn into Roseanne? Are the people behind the scenes different? In the 20 years I've been here, I have seen a sea change in the kind of personality who works here. Just in the last decade or so, a new, morally rudderless kind of person has come to dominate Hollywood far more than before. I hear it from local lawyers all of the time: Trust is greatly diminished. Resort to courts is greatly increased. Theft is commonplace.

Is this the '60s generation taking over, without even a pretense of morality? Maybe it's just the same demolition of virtues that can be seen in other fields. Book publishing has become every bit as bad as Hollywood, and investment banking morality is largely an oxymoron. Whatever the reason, there really are worse kinds of people in positions of authority here recently. And I think it shows in the product.

Ben Stein is a writer, actor, and lawyer in Malibu, California, and a regular contributor to The American Enterprise.

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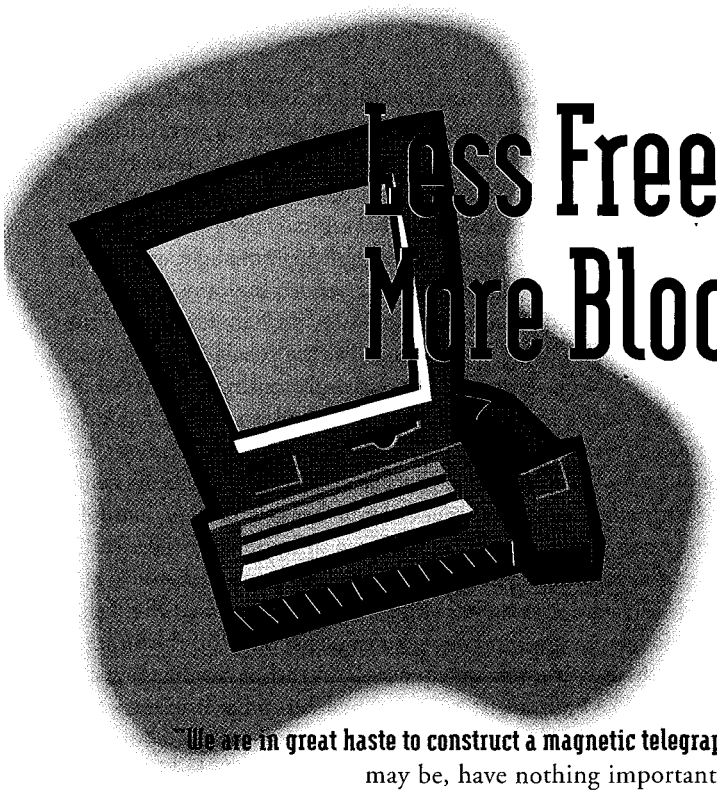

Less Freedom. Slower Speed. More Blockages. (...Just what the Internet needs.)

"We are in great haste to construct a magnetic telegraph from Maine to Texas; but Maine and Texas, it may be, have nothing important to communicate." This hesitation by Henry David Thoreau over the new electronic technology of the nineteenth century is not a Luddite rejection of progress. Thoreau, a robust and self-confessed lover of the present, was a friend of technology and communication, and his remark is meant to help rather than frustrate them. His comment does, however, contain two implicit questions about the nature of communication which are worth bearing in mind as we consider the information superhighway, the equivalent of the telegraph in our own times. One question is: who counts as a significant communicator? The other question concerns the information itself: what counts as a significant message?

Boosters of the new communications and information technology like Bill Gates and Nicholas Negroponte tend toward the apocalyptic. They praise its speed, ease, cheapness, volume, accessibility, flexibility, and egalitarianism, and suggest that once some quantitative threshold of real-time information exchange is crossed, something akin to a global brain will emerge, using individual terminals as neurons to carry thoughts perceived as such only by the transcendent unity of the worldbrain itself. This is an attractive idea; but on closer examination it may not be as exciting as it sounds. For such collective brains already exist, and have existed for thousands of years, albeit on a smaller scale and at a much slower rate of action. What else is a culture, but a sort of super-brain? The disciplines of the humanities have been studying these brains since the Renaissance. Art history tracks their collective visual imagination; literary history gives the genealogy of their verbal "memes" (geneticist Richard Dawkins' term for cultural ideas and themes that propagate themselves like genes through the population). Indeed, the means of communication were slower for Mediterranean Hellenic civilization or Medieval Christendom or the Spanish Empire: sailing ships and mule trains and semaphore and even telegraphy do not make very fast synapses, certainly not as quick as fiber-optic land-lines or satellite faxes. But in slow motion public opinion was formed, fragments of melody infected whole continents, scientific knowledge propagated itself, religions fired the collective spiritual imagination.

By Frederick Turner

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The Internet needs communicators who are educated in the traditional humanities and sciences. People who have moral experience. It needs editors.

There may even have been advantages to the molasses-slow movement of collective thought along the sea-lanes and silk routes of the old world. The very difficulty and expense of communication, the resistance of relatively isolated communities to fresh ideas, would have insured that the ideas that did win acceptance had some memorability and depth. In order to have carrying power, an utterance would best be redundantly metaphorical, elegant and parsimonious in expression, of broad emotional appeal, narratively addictive, formally rhythmic so that variations in the rhythm could themselves carry information—in a word, poetry. We treasure such old memes like odd, precious antiques, and feel in them a density of soul that makes us vaguely nostalgic. If we must entrust to an expensive, slow, and risky camel-caravan the bundle of meaning we wish to send, we will make sure that it is worth the trouble. And this is where Thoreau's critique may be of great value.

The advantages of our information superhighway cited by its enthusiasts can be summed up in three words: transparency, volume, and speed. They in turn boil down to one deep metaphor, the medium of the technology itself: light. The Internet message is light. It is light in that it does not get in its own way, and thus huge volumes of information can be packed into a short burst; it is light in that it can move only where it is not resisted by an opaque body that casts a shadow; it is light in that it weighs next to nothing; it is light in that it is faster than anything else in the universe. But without the opposites of light, in a complementary tension with life's advantages, no significant message can be sent or received. Significance comes from the tension between transparency, volume, and speed on one hand, and opacity, selectiveness, and mass on the other.

Two anecdotes may help explain what I mean. I was talking recently to a friend who had just received an e-mail message from an anonymous sender: "Have a Happy Thanksgiving." It annoyed my friend; it meant only the bother of having to read and erase it. The message cost nothing to send, and without an identification of its author was meaningless. Doubtless it had been sent out to thousands or even millions of victims, and had been received by them—or at least by their computers—a faction of a second later. It was a supremely light message. If one's life were made up of such messages, being would, in the words of Milan Kundera, indeed be characterized by an unbearable lightness. The other anecdote is my own; a friend, trying to convince me to activate my e-mail address, pointed out that the advantage of e-mail was that by convention there was no obligation to reply. This for a moment seemed persuasive: I am overwhelmed by the volume of my ordinary mail. Wouldn't it be lovely not to have to reciprocate? But then the question occurred to me that if it did not require a reply, how could the message have any importance?

So I returned to Thoreau's question. What makes a message important? Part of the answer is that it has a relevant sender and a relevant recipient. The "Happy Thanksgiving" message was meaningless because it had neither. But what constitutes a relevant sender and receiver? The answer is darkness, or opacity. The sender of a message must be opaque; he cannot be transparent, for then he cannot be an original source of light. If he is like glass, the only light that comes from him must have come from somewhere else, and he is merely the conduit or window through which the light passes. He is not a significant sender, but only a medium. Paradoxically, it is only the darkness in him, the opacity which resists the passage of light, that makes him an authentic source of light.

But this was not all, I meditated. Darkness was, if anything, an even more important qualification of the receiver of the message. For without an opaque barrier to arrest the information, it would simply continue in an invisible beam at lightspeed toward the edge of the universe. A receiver of a message must get in the way of the information, stop it, cast a shadow, absorb it and transform it in his own unique and characteristic fashion. And this process is not efficient; it is effective precisely to the extent that it is not efficient. The brain registers and remembers what it receives as a delicate and complex scarring, a thickening of synaptic spurs and a broadening and thinning of the synaptic cleft. To hold music, a CD disk must be burned with laser holes; the light that inscribes it must be arrested and transformed by violent heat and mechanical damage to the disk's surface.

I now realized why my friend's "Happy Thanksgiving" story had reminded me of Emerson's famous image of a transparent eyeball. The image had always annoyed me, and in the same way that the smiley message had annoyed my friend; the eye would have to be blind. It might be all-tolerant, all-accepting; but only because it could receive and transmit nothing, be conscious of nothing, register nothing. What sees is not the glassy cornea or the transpicuous jellies of the lens and aqueous fluid: it is the retina, the "net" of the eye's inside surface, the opaque pigment of the retinal neurons, that traps the light. And even these neurons do not truly see, for they are designed to transmit a faithful message. It is only when the original light energy is translated, corralled, and cut off from all escape in the brain's labyrinth, that it is seen.

Thus part of the solution to Thoreau's problem of how to make a message important enough to be worth sending and hearing is opacity. We need opaque senders and receivers; only thus can the splendid transparency, which Internet enthusiasts like to praise, possess any value. And what is opacity, to explain the metaphor? It is the formed character and personal resistances of the sender and receiver. It is the inherited, refractory nature of their genetic nature, activated by their environment; the burned-in skills, knowledge, prejudices, habits, virtues, loyalties of their education and self-formation; the always-tragic history of their personal identity.

The second great advantage claimed for the new information technology is its volume. Light, the medium of its communication and storage system, takes up no space and cannot get in its own way. It is like Descartes' dream of unextended substance, of which he believed mind to be composed. Infinite hosts of its angels can dance on the head of a PIN. Every year or two the BIPS, baud rates, FLOPS, RAM and disk memory capacity are doubled, and information pours through the Web like water through a

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firehose. E-mail boxes would overflow if there were any reasonable limit to their capacity.

But volume is no virtue in itself. Standing in Grand Central Station, I can hear a thousand conversations, but can attend to none. Michael Polanyi rightly said that to attend to something, one must attend from everything else. In the first heady days of the Net its participants were self-selected, by their very access to the system, for imagination, technological intelligence, and proven professional responsibility. Now the Net is open to all and is full of the braying of electronic graffiti artists and ego therapy. Techniques for disciplining "flamers" are gradually emerging, but the Net is nevertheless uncomfortably like an infinite lavatory wall where the worst can indulge their appetite for publicity and immortality. Imagine a magazine with enormous circulation, no price, an instantaneous publication cycle, and no editors; what a temptation it would be for bores, blowhards, nags, ideologues, and foulmouths. However easy it may be to riffle through the pages, finding the nuggets worth reading is increasingly like the task of the poor wretch who must comb the randomly typed gibberish of the proverbial thousand monkeys for the proverbial works of Shakespeare.

With volume must come selection. Selection involves prioritizing, hierarchizing, rejection—in a word, editing. To be useful, light must be appropriately focussed and stopped down. There can be no millennium of infinite communication; we are thrown back on the old arduous task of judgment and discrimination. There must be a center where the ideas are most coherent, the information most relevant, the moral content most conducive to happiness and success, the aesthetic experience most valuable, the personal contact most civilized and human. And there must be margins to which the less coherent, relevant, valuable and human is consigned. It is not a matter of censorship—we cannot abolish trash, and to try is self defeating. But we can separate the trash from the real goods, mark the trash so we can avoid it. Certainly there is the old political problem of who gets to be the gatekeepers. But it is no tyranny that there are preferred editors, as long as none is denied the freedom of the press. Let this be a call for a poetics of the Net for a renewal of the quest for excellence of expression.

And let us be aware that such a poetics must involve a rejection of the anti-hierarchical ideas of the postmodern academy. Deconstruction, radical feminism, multiculturalism, cultural politics are attempts at a non-discriminatory mode of thought, and as such are the chief obstacles in the way of progress in the new information technology. Discrimination is the very function of the sensory cortex, and is the only beginning of any real grasp on the world. Half of the brain's connections function to inhibit; the brain works only because half of it is telling itself to shut up, to pay no attention, to forget. If, like Borges' fictional character Funes the Memorious, we had to remember everything—the only way we could avoid being discriminatory in our perception—we would have to carry our cortex around in a wheelbarrow, and even so could live only a few months before we ran out of memory capacity. The monotremes, those strange, furry, warm-blooded, duckbilled egg-layers that bridge the gap between the birds and the mammals, do not dream. Dreaming is the way we forget the day's events, synopsize and abstract and edit them in the light of past experience, and clear the way for the next day. The spiny echidna, a monotreme, has a gigantic forebrain, remembers everything, and is very stupid.

Speed is perhaps the most vaunted of the advantages of the new communications technology. But again, mere speed is no virtue in itself. The universe is full of useless "trash" light whizzing through space at 186,000 miles per second and having no effect on anything whatsoever. Light can move so fast because it is light, if I may be forgiven the pun. It weighs next to nothing. This is why it can stop so easily, and turn on a dime (with a mirror or a lens). But anything that can turn or stop so fast is by definition inconsequential; it has no consequence, no consequences. It makes no difference. For something fast to make a difference it must also have mass, as the laws of motion tell us: momentum is velocity times mass. And momentum is what is of moment, what counts, what makes a difference. Weighty matters do not easily turn on a dime, and when they do, large changes are made in the world around them. Thus information transfers that are merely fast do not necessarily amount to anything. We need to cultivate the mass and weight of what we send and receive. And what is this heaviness that is so far somewhat lacking in the Net, and that needs to be developed? I think it is the weight of beauty, the dense involution of poetry and art.

Another way of putting this is that the speed of telecommunications has to be thickened and ballasted by significant time; time and matter are deeply connected, as the terms "consequence" and "moment," which we found necessary to talk about the benefits of mass, might suggest. Light is timeless. A photon is identical at the beginning of its million-light-year journey and at its end; it experiences no time, and thus undergoes no time. Light knotted up into itself is a maker, which has a more complex experience of time; and matter knotted up into itself in the self-recording helix of DNA has a more complex temporal existence still. We, who are life knotted into self-awareness, so that we write and read essays about our own modes of communication, are dense and massive concentrations of time. We need dreams and downtime to thicken the brew of our souls. We need telecommunications that enrich rather than impoverish the quality of time; and we must go no further than the experience of a great nineteenth-century novel, a Beethoven symphony, a Rembrandt to know what "enriched time" means. The way we complicate and thicken time is through story; narrative; whether as suspenseful fiction or as the tragicomedy of personal and national history.

What, then, does the new electronic technology require to become a valuable addition to the human world? In addition to the virtues of lightness—transparency, volume, speed—it needs the virtues of heaviness and darkness-opacity, selectiveness, mass and time. It needs communicators who are educated in the traditional humanities and sciences, who have a "dark" inner process of moral experience and decision, and who thus have something to say to each other. It needs editors. And it needs the weightiness and momentum of artistic form and story. Maine and Texas may well have something to communicate over the Net; but that something is a function of their own darkness and weight, and the darkness and weight of their message, as well as of the lightness and speed of the communications technology.

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CENTRALIZED OR DECENTRALIZED—WHICH WORLD WILL THE INTERNET BRING?

Computer visionaries argue that an all-purpose Internet is coming which will positively transform our society. A whole new world will arise, they predict, out of Internet uses of Sun Microsystems' new Java language. Just as personal computers pushed big mainframe computers to the margins, it is said the end result of Java will be for desktop PCs (equipped with sophisticated processors, big memories, and private software that make them expensive) to be discarded in favor of cheap, barebones terminals connected to the World Wide Web. Instead of buying their own software, people will just use what they want on the Web. Their work will be processed on the Web. They will play their games and write their letters and calculate their finances online. Windows operating systems and hard drives and the whole culture and economy of decentralized computing will be gone. Instead the world will rely on the Internet to find, shape, and store information.

By Douglas Gomery

Conservative intellectual and technology strategist George Gilder insists multimedia computers are going to "usurp phones, televisions, and video game players entirely." They are also, he believes, going to replace TV. For Gilder, "The computer industry is converging with the television industry in the same sense that the automobile converged with the horse; making the boob tube into an active hive of theater, museum, classroom, banking system, shopping center, post office, and communicator is contrary to the nature of the box."

This Internet vision is a striking view of the future. What is perhaps most startling is that it implies we are headed back toward centralization, bigness, and universal reliance on a small handful of uniform languages, companies, standards. The rhetoric at the birth of the PC held that desktop computing had smashed centralization and bigness forever. But then we ended up with a Microsoft-Intel juggernaut controlling 80 percent of the market and killing off competitors (not just the little guys, but even the #2 finishers like WordPerfect, Lotus, and Apple). Now, the computer world's seers tell us we will be going back to the dumb terminal linked to the big brain and info-repository many miles away—in certain important ways back to the world of the central mainframe.

How will this tension between centralization and decentralization shake itself out? Is the Java/Internet/central-server/shared-file model really likely to become dominant? Will it replace today's PC? What factors other than technology will determine whether the Internet eventually usurps competing information and entertainment media? And is reversing the 20-year trend of moving computing power closer and closer to the user a good thing?

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There are reasons to be skeptical about the idea that dumb terminals and the Internet will replace today's PCs. This would mean that to get even the simplest task done, users would first have to connect to the network and download. There are also security and privacy issues we are a long way from resolving. Will corporate buyers and home shoppers want all their financial information sitting out there on some server? And what about traffic congestion? Already the increased loads on the Internet are slowing access; it will only worsen if millions upon millions of new users try to move 3-D environments and whole movies down the Internet pipe.

> Seers tell us we will be going back to the dumb terminal linked to the distant brain—in some ways, back to the world of the central mainframe.

Most advocates of the Java-Internet model are senior executives of companies that have lost the PC war to Microsoft. Their desire is to kill the PC as we know it so they can challenge Bill Gates again in some new realm. For them, an industrial shake-up would be a business opportunity.

But establishing mass substitutes for current products is difficult at best, even assuming new technology that provides a superior service at a lower price. Home shopping, for instance, has not replaced the mall, despite a lot of investment and hoopla. Or consider George Gilder's boldest assertion: that the Internet will replace today's TV as the appliance of choice for entertainment and news gathering in American homes. There are stumbling blocks in the way, and they have less to do with technology than with business practices and human psychology.

At the top of the list is ease of use. A key reason for the dominance of the television is that its form and function are so simple. Anybody can extract everything a TV offers without any difficulty. In contrast to TV couch potatoes, however, today's PC users, despite being a highly educated vanguard, cry for help millions upon millions of times per month. How many frustrated customer-assistance calls might Java's Internet-central get?

Internet enthusiasts hope that today's couch potatoes will become an endangered species, that America will cease being a nation of passive, football-watching idiots, and be transformed instead into a selective, knowledge-seeking culture of informed and slender people. One can only wish them well. But as a business proposition this will not be easy to engineer.

To mine a new mass market of networked communications, computer hardware and software companies will have to become good at dealing with millions upon millions of ordinary consumers. None have a good track record navigating such broad consumer markets. Just try reading any computer manual produced by these companies. By contrast, TV broadcasters, cable companies, and the movie studios have experience and know-how when it comes to delivering what consumers want, and keeping them coming back for more.

Most future paying consumers will find it hard to justify the endless delays, disconnects, server errors, and "host unavailable" messages that characterize today's on-line world. Today most of us put up with these annoyances because, frankly, we are free riders, paying nothing personally for endless surfing. The bill for most university and corporate use skips the user and goes to his or her institution. In addition, in this wonderful age of early exploration of the Web almost all the best content is itself also free. But that will not last. If and when we have to pay personally, many of us will use the systems much less heavily.

I doubt the rise of the Net will mean the "death" of TV and Hollywood; quite the contrary. Just as we continue to use radio today, even while we use it differently from the way our grandparents did, Americans in the future will draw on a multiplicity of media to communicate, entertain, and inform themselves. The old media will survive, and we will choose among a plethora of new and old communications outlets of which the Internet will be but one part.

To understand the prospects for the information superhighway, think for a moment about how entrepreneurs go about making money with any invention. The key step comes in finding ways to convince the public to regularly part with its money. This is often less glamorous than expected. In 1995, with all the hype about the Web and the Internet, *Forbes* named Hewlett-Packard as its outstanding company of the year. The key to HP's successful rise? Ink and paper. The company has become the dominant seller of computer printers, a business that relies less on selling machines than on selling refills. Taking a page from the book written nearly a century ago by razor baron King Gillette, HP has raked in millions selling disposable ink and toner cartridges. The average business user goes through a cartridge every couple of months, and for a color inkjet printer, Hewlett-Packard sells them for three times what they cost to make.

Economics always trumps technology. Promises are judged and evaluated in the reality of the marketplace, not in the minds of futurists. The various gadgets must actually work together to bring the public something it wants and needs—and is willing and able to pay for. In what consumer markets will the Internet battle be fought? Primarily three: recorded entertainment (movies, TV, games, and music); news (print and broadcast); and information (books, magazines, and libraries).

Of these, the entertainment industry is the most centralized and most able to protect itself. Disney's purchase of ABC/Cap Cities shows that Hollywood can and will keep control over the distribution of its products. And on the creative front, Hollywood has an unchallenged franchise. The studios alone have expertise to create what today's public wants in the form of mass entertainment. And they have a track record of ultimate adaptation. Throughout the twentieth century, with the coming of myriad new technologies ranging from movies with sound and then color to over-the-air TV, then cable and VCRs, Hollywood has domi-

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nated and prospered. There is no reason to think Hollywood's power will lessen in the future.

Keep some perspective on Hollywood's deep pockets. Sales of multimedia software on CD-ROM disks are expected to double this year to $1 billion. Pundits predict that revenues from the Internet's World Wide Web will increase from $93 million this year to $1.8 billion by 1999, mostly through advertising. While this growth is promising, these new businesses pale next to the revenue of a single Hollywood studio, with annual sales measured in the billions of dollars.

The news business is also likely to remain a concentrated industry. As with Hollywood, the major news organizations have been re-inventing themselves. At the leading edge, NBC has allied with Microsoft. This and other linkups of news content producers and distributors will prove difficult for any Internet start-up to topple.

The best hope for new entrants lies within the information industry. Production of magazines and books has long been only modestly concentrated, because start-up costs are reasonable. Look for on-line information businesses in this area to expand. But this success will not cause existing publishers to go away any more than the Net will bring the end of TV or newspapers.

As industry warfare rages in the future, one legal matter will be critical—intellectual property rights. What accrues to the creators of information and entertainment products as it becomes easier and easier to gain access to these goods across the Internet? A writer goes to the effort to create a book because he or she can participate in its sales through royalties paid by distributors. But what if the book is on the Internet, free for the taking? Will writers, composers, painters, and filmmakers spend the years necessary to create intellectual property from which they can gain no royalty? Not likely.

Consumers never buy technology for technology's sake. They are seeking access to the ideas and sensations the technology transmits. If the info-highway lacks mechanisms giving creators an incentive to put their mental products on it, the medium's rapid growth will be stifled.

To compensate creators of electronically transmitted content, some argue for a fee charged up front and then waived forever, as with the first sale of books and recorded music at the present. Others would assign every computer-user a code that, when activated, would charge an account, much like long distance telephoning now works. Still others would charge lump sum royalties based on a sampling of use, similar to the way ASCAP and BMI reimburse musicians for music played in restaurants and other public venues. No system is now in place, but one will have to be before much further expansion occurs. It will often take large companies to solve and pay for these distribution and content problems. Small challengers will arise, but in the end it will often be easier simply to sell out.

We should stop thinking about the new communications world in technical terms and start shifting the focus to economics. The Internet in its present form is no model for the future because it is self-consciously non-profit. The Net has worked so well so far because it is an electronic conference table populated by educated people with pioneering spirit, lots of free time, and institutional subsidies that are bound to be reduced once the experimental phase comes to an end. This will not be the population, or the business pattern, of the future. An enduring industry requires a regular revenue stream and the possibility of profits.

It is not likely the electronic world will ever again be as decentralized and open as it has been for the last decade. In the future the info-highway will likely be populated by a handful of large entertainment corporations and a clutch of news producers allied with the telecom companies, plus lots of new entrants on the fast-expanding information side, once the copyright issue is resolved. Some small companies will break through as Microsoft did during the PC boom, but that will be difficult. The info-net will fulfill much of the hope and promise its adherents assert today. But don't expect a new world.

Douglas Gomery is a professor at the University of Maryland. His column "The Economics of Television" is a regular feature of the American Journalism Review.

THE DEATH OF GEOGRAPHY, THE RISE OF ANONYMITY, AND THE INTERNET

A century after the closing of the American frontier, governments are trying to tame the electronic frontier. Most recently, President Clinton signed a bill increasing the penalties for distributing child pornography by computer, and Congress passed legislation banning indecent material on line. These efforts, and others in different parts of the world, grow out of official worries that traditional legal prohibitions don't work in cyberspace. Here's why: the Internet obliterates geography.

Human awareness was once defined by proximity and physical contact. Someone knew only what was close at hand. People 50 miles distant might as well have been a continent away. Technology gradually stretched those boundaries, enabling people to cast themselves and their thoughts over wider and wider areas. State authority expanded—from village, to city-state, to nation, to empire. People migrated. Knowledge and culture spread.

Not everyone applauded the march of progress. A small-town denizen, wrote Sherwood Anderson in *Winesburg, Ohio,* now "has his mind filled to overflowing" by mass-circulation books, magazines, and newspapers. As a result, "the farmer by the stove is brother to the men of the cities, and if you listen you will find him talking as glibly and as senselessly."

Fearing such homogenization, governments sometimes tried to buttress geographic identities against technological in-

By Stephen Bates

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cursion. In the 1840s, Congress debated whether the post office should deliver newspapers for free. Editors were torn. They wanted to avoid postal charges, but they feared competition from faraway brethren. They came up with a compromise that became federal law: Newspapers were delivered for free, but only within 30 miles of their place of publication.

Laws like that won't work for today's e-mail. Compared to earlier developments that eased communications, the Internet's impact is more profound. On the Internet, distance has no bearing on cost (unlike the telephone). The Internet (unlike broadcasting) not only delivers the world to us, but also delivers us to the world—we can talk back. And the Internet (in contrast to something like shortwave radio) provides us with the ability to transmit visual images, text, and decent audio.

The significance of place is being undercut by the new information technologies. We can now learn, almost instantly, the thoughts of someone on the other side of the globe. His whereabouts become as immaterial as his shoe size. This is causing what might be called the death of geography.

The significance of place is being undercut by the new information technologies. Whereabouts become as immaterial as shoe size.

But don't count on a painless passing. Our institutions and expectations are deeply rooted in geography. Often our instincts about geography pull us one way while the new technologies yank us in the opposite direction.

Take the distribution of pornography. We traditionally restrict sexually oriented businesses to "red light districts," either formally or informally. Within bookstores and newsstands, pornography is placed behind the counter or on a high shelf; some states mandate such treatment. Many video stores put X-rated titles in a separate room open only to adults. These acts of geographic segregation, though hardly perfect, work reasonably well to help parents filter the information reaching children.

They also help communities stigmatize adult consumption of pornography. At an X-rated theater, a patron must consume his pornographic materials in public, and risk being spotted by someone he knows. Home videos have rejuvenated the pornographic film industry, but even here, the patron must publicly venture into an adult-only zone at the video store.

The Internet renders the entire transaction private, invisible, ungeographic. Moreover, users can tour pornographic sites without exposing their age. The operator of a dirty bookstore can tell a twelve-year-old to scram. The operator of a dirty cybersite can't—and twelve-year-olds know it. Users not only can acquire pornography without leaving home, they can, as some enterprising teenagers have discovered, acquire it without leaving the school library. Thanks to this reduced danger of discovery, pornographic materials on the Internet have become hugely popular.

Last year, the Christian Coalition, Family Research Council, and other conservative organizations called for new legislation to keep children away from on-line pornography. One result was the Communications Decency Act, which would ban the transmission of "indecent" material over computer networks accessible to the young. "Society has long embraced the principle that those who peddle harmful material have the obligation to keep the material from children," the Family Research Council explained in a fact sheet. "Computer indecency should be no exception."

But, as enthusiasts never tire of pointing out, cyberspace is different. The operator of a pornographic bookstore already keeps an eye on his customers; so it's no great imposition to tell him to boot out any minors who venture in. Someone who posts a pornographic image on the Internet, on the other hand, has no idea who is going to look at it. Under some circumstances he may know what company or institution gives a viewer his Net access. He may even know his e-mail addresses. But he won't know his age. Consequently, the only way to keep children away from a pornographic image on the Net is to keep everyone away from it. For any part of the Internet to be child-safe, all of it must be child-safe. As a medium unhindered by geography, the choice is all or nothing.

Civil libertarians are horrified at the thought of Congress trying to make the rambunctious Net into a serene playground. They argue that the First Amendment gives adults the right to view pornography, so Congress should not render it inaccessible on the Internet. Some civil libertarians advocate a software solution: filters that will keep children from accessing certain materials on the Net. But savvy kids won't be stopped that easily. Even if a school computer's Usenet "subscription" excludes the alt.sex newsgroups, a user can still reach them in plenty of ways—including an automated system in Japan that obligingly e-mails Usenet posts on request. It's as if the school library meticulously policed its own shelves but let students order *Hustler* through interlibrary loan.

One difficulty in trying to prevent this is that the Internet has no respect for jurisdictional boundaries. If Americans stop posting pornography to the Net, American users will still find porn posted from foreign countries. In a world without geographic limitations, national laws are often little more than trivial speed bumps on the information highway.

The United States, of course, isn't alone in trying to keep certain kinds of material out of public circulation. On the contrary, most other nations are even more active in filtering the public discourse. Canada tries to protect its arts community by limiting the quantity of American television programs shown on its stations. In some Asian and Islamic countries there is worry that too much Western culture will destroy indigenous social practices.

In December, German officials told Compuserve to drop some 200 sex-related newsgroups from its service or risk expulsion from Germany. Reluctant to walk away from a major market, the company obeyed. "As the leading global service, Compu-

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serve must comply with the laws of the many countries in which we operate," said the company in a news release. In San Francisco, protesters poured German beer down the sewer and called a boycott. Compuserve announced plans for software that will limit the sex exclusions to German users—in essence, creating a separate subnetwork for Germany. Here, a technical overlay to a technology's basic transnational nature may reintroduce some geographic distinctions.

"Well I've played telephone tag with Williams for a week, maybe I'll walk next door and talk to him."

From the Wall Street Journal–Permission, Cartoon Features Syndicate

The decline of geography is creating problems for the law in areas other than just vice control. Consider copyright. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's writings are in the public domain in the United Kingdom, but some are still under copyright in the United States. A New Yorker can fly to London, photocopy a Sherlock Holmes story, and fly back with the manuscript; the law permits people to enter the country with infringing items so long as they are not for distribution.

But what if the New Yorker reaches London via the Internet, instead of American Airlines, finds the story on a publicly accessible file site, and downloads it to his PC? Under current law, he has infringed the copyright. Courts won't extend the travel defense ("I flew to London") to virtual travel ("I modemed to London"). The law continues to enshrine notions of geography that no longer exist on the Net.

Similar copyright concerns are likely to crimp the much-touted "virtual library." In 1991, Al Gore wrote that a child working on homework would soon be able to consult "digital libraries containing all the information in the Library of Congress and much more," using a device "no more complicated than a Nintendo machine." Other technophiles have spun out more elaborate scenarios. Someday, they predict, people will read books on handheld computers. By selecting certain screen icons, a user will electronically borrow a publication from the library. The work will be downloaded via wireless communication. It will erase itself after two weeks unless renewed, and encryption will make copying impossible, or nearly so. Alternatively, by selecting different icons, the user will be able to purchase the work from a bookstore or newsstand for permanent downloading. As the buyer makes the purchase, his bank account will be debited.

But in this dream world, who would actually buy books? If a free digitized library work is never more than a few keystrokes away, not many people would pay a $25 fee to own it. We can thus count on publishers to fight such trends. They will use the law to retain the geographic hindrances of today's library—requiring that patrons trudge there to get and return material, for instance—even as bookstores shake off their geographic shackles and go on line.

Already, copyrighted articles and photos are routinely scanned in and posted in cyberspace in violation of copyright law. Some users knowingly flout the law, using "anonymous remailers"—computer systems that erase the sender's identity and forward the message. When copyrighted, Scientology teachings were being posted to the Net through a Finnish remailer, the church brought in Interpol, raided the Finnish site, discovered the e-mail address of the American infringer, and took steps to prosecute him in the United States. Most copyright owners, however, can't go to such lengths. Even if they do, enforcement may prove impossible if the infringer has routed his message through a series of remailers in different countries. Some remailers, moreover, use an algorithm that leaves no traces. Police can shut them down, but they can't learn the senders' identities.

Combine anonymity with encryption and boundary-less trafficking and you see why a new federal law doubles the penalties for child pornography distributed via computer, compared to child porn distributed by other means. This combination also raises serious questions as to whether today's Communications Decency Act, if it becomes law, will be able to slow the flow of on-line illegal pornography.

Not only for law enforcement but in many other areas as well, the cues provided by geographic identity turn out to be surprisingly important. Geography-free communication can be unaccountable and sterile. According to some reports, for instance, many of today's lesbian chat areas on the Internet are populated not by lesbians but principally by straight men masquerading as gay women, exchanging dirty talk with other straight men masquerading as gay women.

Sometimes, electronic pioneer John Gilmore suggests, cyberspace is nothing more than "a telephone network with pretensions." But where it has been shorn of geographic identity and personal responsibility, it can become something more complex. It can produce what science fiction writer William Gibson calls "consensual hallucination." As a *New Yorker* canine cartoon puts it: "On the Internet, nobody knows you're a dog."

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The Promise & Perils of CYBERDEMOCRACY

By Norman Ornstein & Amy Schenkenberg

In 1992, Ross Perot promised that if elected president he would use electronic town hall meetings to guide national decisions. Perot lost the election (and never made clear how those meetings would operate), but the idea of "cyberdemocracy" aroused much interest and is spreading quickly as technology advances. Every U.S. senator and 190 representatives currently have World Wide Web pages, as do all eight major Republican presidential contenders. In 1995, the Library of Congress, under the leadership of Newt Gingrich, established an on-line system offering all legislation considered and passed by Congress.

On the local level, the city government of Colorado Springs has a non-commercial electronic bulletin board called Citylink. Established in 1990 to allow citizens to communicate with city managers and city council members, it's available free of charge. In 1994, the Minnesota Electronic Democracy Project conducted on-line debates among candidates in the gubernatorial and senate races.

States have begun fashioning their governmental processes around this direct-democracy ideal. Twenty-four states permit citizen initiatives that place legislation or constitutional amendments on the ballot. Oregon has held local vote-by-mail elections since 1981, and in 1995 initiated its first state-wide mail ballot to replace Senator Bob Packwood. North Dakota's 1996 presidential primary will be by mail ballot.

All this may be just the beginning. As new technologies emerge, many futurists paint rosy scenarios of more direct roles for individuals in law-making. Some prophesy that legislators will vote and debate from their home state through computers and televisions, eliminating the need for the actual houses of Congress in Washington. Lawrence Grossman, former president of PBS and NBC, imagines Congress evolving into a body that discusses issues and disseminates information, but only makes decisions after being instructed by the public. Futurist Christine Slaton questions the need for elected legislators at all. She envisions using technology to create a participatory democracy where representatives are selected by lot and rotated regularly. Alvin and Heidi Toffler of "third wave" fame predict that today's political parties will disappear, replaced by fluid coalitions that vary according to changing legislative interests. The Tofflers also envision representatives chosen by lot, or at a minimum, elected officials casting 50 percent of a vote and a random sampling of the public casting the other 50 percent. In this scenario, individuals will not only vote on more things than they do now, they'll vote on more complex questions, as simple yes/no votes are replaced by if-then referenda. Nor will voters have to inconvenience themselves by traveling to the local polling station. They probably won't even have to lick a stamp. Instead, voters will simply punch in their vote from their TV remote control, never leaving the house, never having to speak with another individual, not even having to spend more than a few seconds thinking about their choice.

Enchanting as these innovations may sound to Americans grown weary of Washington ways, several questions arise: Would cyberdemocracy in fact be more representative? Would voters take seriously their new responsibilities? Would they even be interested? Who will determine the exact questions the public will decide? And most importantly, what sort of deliberation, if any, will exist under this new regime?

A cyberdemocracy based on personal computers and upscale television systems will not be equally open to all citizens. Twenty-two percent of college graduates go on line at least weekly, while only 1 percent of those with a high school diploma do, a recent Times Mirror survey reports. Men are twice as likely as women to be daily on-line users. Twenty-seven percent of families with incomes of $50,000 or greater have gone on line, but only 6 percent of those with incomes under $20,000 have. Indeed, the Colorado Springs information systems manager reported that in 1995 there were only 250 active Citylink users in a city of over 300,000. No doubt the popularity of comparable information systems will increase substantially over time, and costs will come down, but a skew toward the highly educated and well-to-do is inevitable.

Even if the technology were made available to everyone equally, how would interest be sustained? Lloyd Morrisett, president of the Markle Foundation, recently wrote that he envisions the early fascination with cyberdemocracy ebbing until cybervoting falls into the same predicament as current voting rights: treasured but not necessarily used. Studying California's experience with referenda, Morrisett found that "the ballot has become so loaded with complex initiatives that it seems to discourage people from going to the polls, rather than motivating them to express their judgment." If the average voter tuned out complex items flashing across his screen, "voting" would be much less representative than it is today.

Cyberdemocracy's greatest danger lies in the way it would diminish deliberation in government. Everyone applauds technology's capacity to inform voters and to improve communications

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between them and their representatives. But we must also recall that the Founders expressly rejected "pure" democracies where citizens "assemble and administer the government in person," because they usually end in the tyranny of the majority. The Constitution instead establishes a republic where voters select representatives to make and execute the laws. The Founders designed this process to produce a public *judgment,* enlarging upon and refining popular opinions. That judgment, as opposed to public emotions, can only arise through deliberation. In the slow process of debate, give-and-take, and face-to-face contact among representatives, all perspectives and interests can be considered. The need to persuade an informed group of representatives with diverse concerns should, the Founders thought, result in decisions that are more just and more likely to meet the test of time with citizens.

Deliberation even figures in our political campaigns. Over weeks and months, campaigns provide a larger deliberative canvas, an opportunity for voters to consider issues, governing philosophies, and questions of leadership, resulting in a greater appreciation of the choices that will face Congress and the President. Of course, our governing system does not always live up to the challenge of serious deliberation, but it still remains our foundation.

What happens to deliberation with the ascent of cyberdemocracy? Consider elections. For all the understandable criticism of never-ending campaigns, negative advertising, and demagoguery, campaigns still work, at least sometimes, as deliberative processes. Voters' initial inclination, not to mention their priorities on issues, often change as they receive more information. Early polls rarely reflect the actual voting. Citizens striving for informed judgments usually make them in the final, most intense days of a campaign. Instantaneous electronic voting would destroy whatever is left of this deliberative process. In Oregon most voters return their mail ballots within five days, casting their votes well before the final days (or even weeks) of intense campaigning.

Mail or electronic balloting also removes the symbolic quality of voting as an act where voters make a private judgment in a public place, surrounded by their fellow citizens, acknowledging simultaneously our individuality and our collective responsibility and common purpose. Compare standing in line at a polling place, going into a private booth, and making individual choices with the alternatives of vote-by-mail—the political equivalent of filling out a Publishers Clearing House ballot—or electronic voting, where elections would resemble the Home Shopping Network.

Voting by mail or electronically is only one challenge cyberpolitics presents to deliberative democracy. Consider the difference between laws passed by referenda and laws passed in legislatures. Legislative deliberation encourages informed debate among somewhat-informed individuals with different interests. It allows a proposal to change, often dramatically, as it goes through the gantlet of hearings, floor debate, and amendment in both houses of Congress.

To be sure, some debate can occur during a state referendum campaign, through ads and media analysis, but that is no substitute for face-to-face debate involving not just two sides, but sometimes dozens or hundreds, reflected in representatives from various areas and constituencies. Mail or electronic balloting would short-circuit campaigns even further. And referenda have no amendment process, no matter how complex the issue. Their outcome relies on voters who have many other things to do besides study the issues, much less read the bills or provisions.

Could electronic town meetings provide a popular equivalent to traditional legislating? Theoretically, a broad mass of voters could be part of a different deliberative process. That's the thesis of political scientist James Fishkin, whose "deliberative poll" brought a random sample of 600 citizens together in late January at considerable expense for three days of expert-guided discussion in Austin, Texas. Even if the Fishkin experiment were scrupulously fair, such enterprises generally seem susceptible to undemocratic manipulation by "experts" and agenda-setters. And "deliberative polls" are unlikely to win out over the allure of a quick, trigger-like vote on the TV or computer. Cyberdemocratic meetings would likely turn into fancier versions of "Talk Back Live." And most deliberation would be reduced—as now in California and other initiative-prone states—to high-tech public relations campaigns by powerful interests with the resources to put their issues on the ballot—making for more special interest influence, not more democracy.

Cyberspace offers wonderful possibilities for citizens to discuss issues. New electronic alliances based on similar interests can be enjoyed. And every day, citizens and legislators can download more information. But the combination of cynical distrust of political institutions, a rising tide of populism glorifying "pure" democracy, and the increased speed of information technology, is a highly dangerous one. While Newt Gingrich has benefited from the political cynicism and populism that drove voters in 1994, he knows the dangers facing deliberative democracy. As he told one of his college classes, "Direct democracy says, Okay, how do we feel this week? We all raise our hand. Let's rush off and do it. The concept of republican representation, which is very clear in the Founding Fathers, is you hire somebody who you send to a central place.... They, by definition, learn things you don't learn, because you don't want to—you want to be able to live your life. They are supposed to use their judgment to represent you.... [The Founders] feared the passion of the moment."

Newt is right. But preserving the Founders' vision as the "third wave" of cybertechnology approaches won't be easy.

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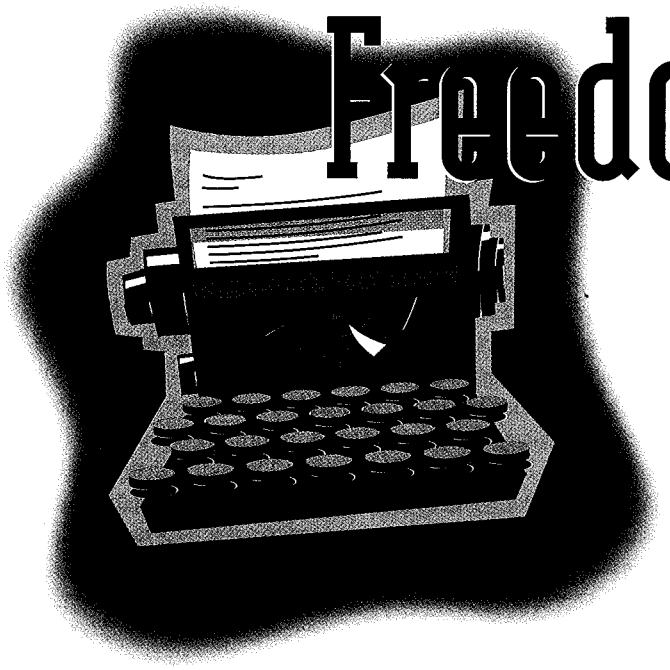

Freedom of Speech

Is America at High Tide...or Low?

It is widely believed that there is more freedom of speech and of the press in America today than at any time past. On the liberal side, Cass Sunstein writes, "Freedom of expression in America is now approaching a system of unregulated private markets." Liberal law professor Archibald Cox refers to America's "continual expansion of individual freedom of expression." Conservative scholar Walter Berns agrees: "Legally we enjoy a greater liberty than ever before in our history." I believe these views are incorrect. If we take "freedom of speech" in its true sense, there is substantially less of it in contemporary America than when our nation was founded.

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The Founders defined freedom of speech as the right of a citizen or organization to state whatever they wish without fear of punishment by government, as long as the statement doesn't unjustly harm some other individual or the community. James Wilson, a leader of the Constitutional Convention of 1787, stated the general view: "What is meant by the liberty of the press is that there should be no antecedent restraints upon it; but that every author is responsible when he attacks the security or welfare of the government, or the safety, character, and property of the individual."

When it came to curbing abuses of free speech, the Founders relied primarily on the rule of law, so as to avoid government excesses. They opposed licensing the press, following the principles of the great English jurist William Blackstone, who wrote that freedom of the press meant above all that government could "not subject the press to the restrictive power of a licenser." In the absence of prior restraint on the press through licensing, government could correct abuses only by subsequent prosecution, with a trial by jury where private citizens, not government officials, would determine the verdict.

The Founders, then, believed that freedom of speech should rest on three pillars: There must be complete freedom for noninjurious speech. There must be no prior restraint on speech through licensing or censorship. And injurious speech must be punished through

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the due process of law. Unfortunately, all three pillars have been seriously eroded by recent government action.

The most important government intrusion on free speech speech came with the passage of the Federal Elections Campaign Act in 1971. The act currently bans private citizens and groups who cooperate or consult with a candidate for Congress from spending more than a fixed amount of money ($1,000 for individuals, $5,000 for groups) on his or her behalf. The act does leave a candidate's supporters free to publish on other topics, so long as they don't engage in "express advocacy." Some courts, however, have held that any discussion of public policy issues prominent in a campaign is "express advocacy" even if a candidate's name is not mentioned, and this has scared many groups out of trying to help candidates for fear of the high legal bills and potential fines they will face if they are accused of violating the act. The law does, however, exempt newspaper owners from its provisions. These owners may spend whatever amount they wish publishing arguments in support of candidates with whom they consult or cooperate. (Is it a coincidence that large newspapers tend to support incumbents or Democrats?)

The Founders would have opposed the Campaign Act because it penalizes open discussion of issues at election time. As John Adams wrote, "Our chief magistrates and senators etc. are [elected] by the people. How are their characters and conduct to be known to their constituents but by the press? If the press is to be stopped and the people kept in ignorance, we had much better have the first magistrate and senators hereditary." Open discussion of "men and measures" is the single most important aspect of free speech. Otherwise, Alexander Hamilton wrote, "there was no other way to preserve liberty, and bring down a tyrannical faction."

Another restriction on free speech comes from limitations placed on employers involved in union elections. In a 1969 case, the Supreme Court ruled that employers can give their workers predictions about the effects of unionization "on the basis of objective fact," but that if the employer expresses his "belief, even though sincere, that unionization will or may result in the closing of the plant," then he is making an illegal "threat of reprisal or force," and if the union loses the election the government will overturn the result. Meanwhile, union organizers are permitted to say anything they please about the employer.

Restrictions on free speech have become a standard element in the enforcement of civil rights law. Courts have ruled that "harassment" is a federal crime under the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Courts have held that a "hostile environment" of harassment exists if, for instance, an employer puts religious articles in the company newsletter, or some employee argues that "women make bad doctors because they are unreliable when they menstruate." A federal circuit court has ruled that while the Act "does not require an employer to fire all 'Archie Bunkers'" in its ranks, the law does require that prompt action be taken "to prevent such bigots from expressing their opinion in a way that abuses or offends their co-workers." As legal scholar Eugene Volokh comments, "Said about almost any other variety of opinion, this statement...would be a civil libertarian's nightmare. Imagine a law requiring that an employer take prompt action to prevent communists from expressing their opinions in a way that abuses or offends their co-workers.'"

The federal Fair Housing Act also punishes deliberative political speech. When two neighborhood activists in Berkeley, California, argued in newsletters and public petitions that the site chosen for a new homeless shelter (next to two liquor stores and a nightclub) was "grossly imprudent," the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development launched an investigation against them. The couple was threatened with fines of $50,000 plus additional damages, with HUD offering to drop the charges if the couple agreed "never to write or speak on housing issues again." After the facts were made public and a public uproar resulted, HUD dropped its lawsuit. But less publicized government harassment continues against others. HUD has routinely held cities liable for political statements made against group homes by city residents—a form of indirect censorship. The result, according to journalist Heather MacDonald, is that "in every city in which HUD has pursued investigations against individuals and community groups, opposition to planned social-service facilities has been severely chilled—just as intended."

The second pillar of free speech erected by the Founders—bans on prior restraint of speech—has been seriously eroded over the past 75 years. Most Americans get their news today from organizations whose activities could be blocked literally at any time by government regulators.

In seventeenth-century England there were two forms of prior restraint. The first required printers to submit individual articles to government censors. The second mandated that printers obtain a license to publish from the Stationers' Company, the "monopoly body of printers" that, according to historian Frederick Siebert, was expected "to keep a tight rein on member printers in return for the grant of a royal charter." The Stationers, a quasi-governmental agency, was authorized to smash the presses of printers who didn't have licenses.

Britain repealed all licensing requirements by 1694, but freedom-loving Englishmen and Americans learned from this history how odious prior restraints on the press can be. The Founders agreed with Blackstone's argument that prior restraints on publication "subject all freedom of sentiment to the prejudices of one man, and make him the arbitrary and infallible judge of all controverted points in learning, religion, and government."

There are ominous parallels between the methods of the Stationers' Company and those of the Federal Communications Commission in the United States. The right to broadcast in America, like the right to publish in old England, is under the ultimate control of the government, and is revocable at any time. Under the Communications Act of 1934, stations receive licenses to broadcast only when the FCC judges it to be "in the public interest, convenience, or necessity." The FCC has never defined what the term "public interest" means. It prefers to use a case-by-case approach that has become known as "regulation by raised eyebrow"—brandishing threats of hearings or delays at license-renewal time for stations that fail to go along with FCC wishes. The Commission has consistently favored broadcasters who share the views of government officials. Oddball or politically dissident stations have often been driven off the air.

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The FCC's first large-scale act of censorship occurred in the late 1930s. The Yankee radio network in New England consistently editorialized against President Franklin Roosevelt. The FCC asked the Yankee network to provide details about its programming, and the network quickly ceased its anti-FDR editorials. While the FCC renewed the licenses of the Yankee stations, the agency warned that, as part of the "public interest" requirement, radio stations "cannot be devoted to the support of principles [the broadcaster] happens to regard most favorably."

The FCC soon made exclusion of "partisan" content a requirement for all broadcasters. Stations swiftly understood that, under the agency's rules, broadcasting a "fireside chat" by President Roosevelt was considered "nonpartisan," while broadcasting a critique of his proposed legislation was deemed to be unacceptable partisan speech.

In 1949 the FCC codified its rules on political content by establishing the "Fairness Doctrine," which declared that stations had to balance any political opinions uttered on the air with opposing points of view. Most broadcasters responded by filling the airwaves with blandly liberal news shows stripped of anything that might offend a federal regulator. But by the early 1960s, a number of conservative radio and television stations had appeared, which the Kennedy administration tried to suppress. As President Kennedy's assistant secretary of commerce, Phil Ruder, later explained, "Our massive strategy was to use the Fairness Doctrine to challenge and harass right-wing broadcasters and hope that the challenges would be so costly to them that they would be inhibited and decide it was too expensive to continue."

The government shut down, among others, WLTB-TV in Jackson, Mississippi, a station strongly critical of federal civil rights policies of the 1960s. The station would introduce its nightly NBC news broadcast with an invitation to stay tuned for the real news after the biased East Coast liberal news was over. The government retaliated by revoking WLTB's license.

In a more famous case, the conservative Red Lion radio station was challenged in a Fairness Doctrine complaint secretly financed by the Democratic National Committee. In a 1969 decision, the Supreme Court ruled that the Constitution permitted the FCC to order Red Lion to give free air time to liberals who disagreed with its conservative broadcast content. The Court ruled, in other words, that the federal government could dictate the content of a station's broadcasting. Attempts by conservatives to fight back during the 1960s by getting the Fairness Doctrine applied in reverse to liberal broadcasters all failed.

Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas once observed that "the regime of federal supervision under the Fairness Doctrine" causes broadcasters to echo "the dominant political voice that emerges after every election." For example, under pressure from the Nixon Administration, broadcasters downplayed the importance of antiwar demonstrations and ignored Watergate until it became a national scandal. It wasn't until 1987, when the FCC finally abolished the Fairness Doctrine, that this particular cloud lifted. Had the Doctrine not been laid to rest at that time during the Reagan administration, it is unlikely today's national political talk radio shows, among other content, could ever have taken to the airwaves without fear of government reprisals. Indeed, in 1993, Democrats in Congress tried to revive the Fairness Doctrine as a means of reining in Rush Limbaugh and other talk hosts, but the broadcasters defended themselves by mobilizing a public backlash.

The end of the Fairness Doctrine, however, doesn't mean that the broadcast media are now free. Broadcasters are still careful not to offend regulators. The beauty of licensing as a means of is that only a few rare examples of overt punishment are needed. As Nixon administration official Clay Whitehead once said, "The value of the sword of Damocles is that it hangs, not falls."

The third pillar of the Founders' scheme for protecting free speech was due process of law, relying on trial by jury to prevent abuses of speech freedom that could be injurious to individuals or the larger community. This pillar too is now crumbling. The one area where speech has become freer in the modern era is in the relaxation of libel, sedition, and obscenity laws. But these apparent liberalizations are in fact contractions of freedom. As one member of our founding generation once wrote, "Every man has a right to use of the press, [as] he has to the use of his arms." But he who commits libel "abuses his privilege, as unquestionably as if he were to plunge his sword into the bosom of a fellow citizen." When a person's honor is stolen by malicious speech; when parents find it hard to teach their children personal responsibility because of pervasive obscenity; when those who would overthrow democracy are allowed to proceed without fear of punishment—in these cases freedom suffers to the point where it could one day perish.

Take the case of libel. In 1983, *Hustler* published a satire in which Rev. Jerry Falwell was portrayed as describing a drunken incestuous relationship with his mother. "I think I have never been as angry as I was at that moment," says Falwell, describing his reaction on first seeing the article. "In all of my life I had never believed that human beings could do something like this." In a formal deposition, *Hustler* publisher Larry Flynt admitted he was trying to "assassinate" the integrity of Jerry Falwell. Yet the Supreme Court ruled that no actionable injury had taken place.

Besides weakening libel laws, courts have also redefined free speech as "freedom of expression." Constitutionally protected "speech" now includes nude dancing, almost all pornography, vulgarities spoken in public and worn on clothing, personal insults, flag burning, and more. This replacement of "speech" with "expression" means that the critical distinction between saying something and doing something has broken down. It also means that the distinction between speech that communicates thought and speech that expresses mere emotion is lost. In the famous "f-- the draft" case, the Supreme Court endorsed the view that, in Justice Harlan's words, "One man's vulgarity is another man's lyric."

It is true, then, that licentious speech now enjoys unprecedented protection. But expanded toleration for character assassination, vulgarities on bumper stickers, sex in the movies, and flag burning can hardly compensate Americans for greater censorship via government regulation. In too many areas, the ability of Americans to criticize government bureaus without fear of penalty or harassment has been dangerously restricted. And that is the kind of free speech that matters most.

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CHINA'S WAR ON CHILDREN

Photo Credit: UPI/Bettman

BY JOHN S. AIRD

In June of 1995, Britain's Channel Four television aired a documentary called *The Dying Rooms.* In it, Kate Blewett, Brian Woods, and Peter Hugh recorded what they found when they surreptiously filmed several orphanages run by the Chinese government. They found infants and children tied to their cots and left unattended without food or medical attention until they died. Some particularly haunting footage shows a little girl in the last stages of starvation, abandoned in one of the "dying rooms" that give the film its title. When the film-makers called later to inquire about the girl, the orphanage denied that she had ever existed.

Then in January 1996, a Chinese doctor who had been on staff at a Shanghai orphanage from 1988 to 1993, and is now living abroad, testified (with corroboration from medical reports and photographs she smuggled out) that at her one institution alone, 400 children were allowed to die, mostly by starvation, over a five-year period. (Orphanage personnel admit on camera in "The Dying Rooms" that as many as 90 percent of the children admitted to some institutions die there.) A January report on this subject from the group Human Rights Watch/Asia estimates from central government reports that deaths of children in China's state-run orphanages run in the thousands every year.

Some Chinese officials have denounced these revelations as "lies" and "malicious fraud" motivated by personal enmity. In January, Western reporters were taken by Chinese authorities on a tour of one model orphanage that had apparently been set up in some haste for their benefit. One journalist noted that its computers were so new their packing boxes were still in the building. Other Chinese officials admit that there are many deaths in state orphanages, but blame them on cold weather, lack of electricity, and a shortage of resources in a country where 80 million people live in poverty.

But poverty doesn't explain why Chinese orphans are given sleeping pills instead of food, tied to cribs and chairs, left unchanged when soiled, denied medical care, and allowed to die of neglect. According to press coverage of the Human Rights Watch/Asia report, state orphanages in China select out children for "summary resolution" (i.e. death by neglect) quite methodically. Typical state-run homes have become little more than "assembly lines" for the elimination of unwanted babies.

The basic problem is not that China can't afford to support these children. With the Chinese economy booming, living standards in the country are rising. Nor are the "dying rooms" just a matter of bad institutional management, as some Western observers have assumed. The real problem is the Chinese government's attitude toward the orphans. China's leaders consider these children "surplus" population. They try to prevent their birth by forced abortion (often so late in pregnancy as to amount to state-mandated infanticide), and they boast of the numbers of births averted by China's coercive family planning program. To these authorities, the death of orphans is nothing to regret, because it furthers their objective of reduced population growth.

The Chinese family planning program has a long history of coercion, dating back at least to the early 1970s. After peaking in 1983, the use of force eased somewhat because of a public backlash that caused "alienation of the masses from the Party." But the pressures escalated again by the late 1980s. Especially since 1993, reports by foreign journalists have detailed shocking human rights violations in the PRC's family planning program. Forced IUD insertions, forced abortions, and involuntary sterilizations are widely reported. Couples who refuse to abort unauthorized pregnancies face beatings, jailings, heavy fines, confiscations of all wealth and property, and the destruction of their houses as punishment.

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Steven Mosher's 1993 book, *A Mother's Ordeal*, describes infanticide carried out by obstetricians working under orders not to permit unauthorized newborns to leave the hospital alive. In November 1995, a Chinese obstetrician now living in Melbourne, Australia, with whom I shared an interview conducted by Radio Australia, confirmed that this was official policy. Doctors in Chinese hospitals, she said, work under orders by the authorities to kill all babies born without government permission, or suffer severe penalties. The methods used include injecting formaldehyde into the infant's brain as it crowns, and crushing the emerging head with forceps. As long as the baby is killed while still partly in the womb, its death counts as an abortion, not as infant mortality. Unauthorized babies born before they could be destroyed have reportedly been suffocated or discarded alive in waste receptacles, from where their muffled cries are sometimes heard until they die.

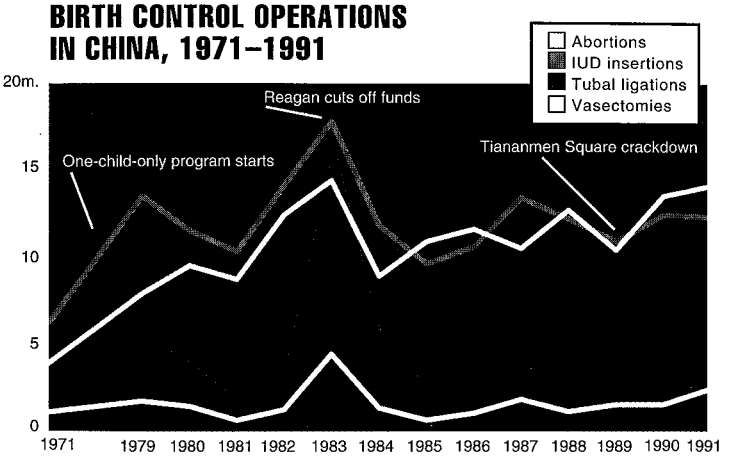
In April 1993, *New York Times* correspondent Sheryl WuDunn reported that parents in Guizhou Province who had children without permission were punished by severe fines, confiscations of property, smashed houses, and physical beatings. That same month, *Washington Post* reporter Lena Sun described house smashing in Hebei and reported high forced-sterilization rates in 1991 and 1992. In April 1994, Sun told of two women in an Anhui village who were seized in the middle of the night and ordered to have abortions because their father-in-law had offended the local Party boss.

In August 1994, a Hong Kong journal described a midnight raid on the home of a pregnant woman in Fujian province:

> With sticks, axes, iron bars, and big hammers in their hands, a dozen sturdy men stepped out of the commune building in the company of several members of the Family Planning Commission. Dogs began barking at that moment. Villagers here all say that the moment dogs begin barking, they know the Family Planning Commission has sent its men out again.
>
> It took the group of men less than five minutes to reach the house...[They] forced their way into the house. While destroying everything in the house, they shouted out loudly: "The big-bellied woman, come out here immediately!" ...However, the pregnant woman had already escaped into the dark night. Failing to capture her "hunting object," a female family planning propagandist gave the order to take away the old grandma of the family. To redeem the old lady, the family must either hand over the pregnant woman or pay a fine of 20,000 yuan to give birth to a child in excess of the plan.
>
> According to the family planning policy currently in practice on the mainland...any attempt to give birth to children in excess of the plan will be crushed by the forced imposition of induced abortion... To this end, rural communes have set up special teams to search and capture pregnant women, and those who are caught will be sent immediately to nearby hospitals to have an abortion.... According to a nurse in Quanzhou City, forced abortions have left large numbers of pregnant women with uterine diseases, some of whom have even contracted cancer of the uterus while others have become sterile.

The results of these tactics show up clearly in official statistics. In the year 1991, according to the latest available government figures, the number of abortions carried out in China exceeded 14 million for the first time since 1983. The numbers of vasectomies and tubal ligations also were rising (see accompanying graph).

BIRTH CONTROL OPERATIONS IN CHINA, 1971–1991



Source: *Yearbook of Public Health in the People's Republic of China*, Beijing, 1993.

China's current birth control crackdown was launched on May 12, 1991, by a "decision" of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee and the State Council that called for "stepping up family planning work and strictly controlling population growth." Chinese leaders claimed that the escalation was needed because without it the country's living standards, natural resources, ecology, and "the quality of the whole nation" would be threatened. The new directive demanded that local authorities "resolutely" implement existing policies "without any wavering, loosening, or changes." The intent was to tighten up on an already-established population control system under which birth quotas and other targets set by the central authorities are allocated to lower levels, and administrators at all levels are required to sign contracts guaranteeing their fulfillment. Any leader from the provincial level downward who fails to fulfill his targets is subject to penalties that range from loss of bonuses and promotions to loss of job. Authorities also adopted a rule that any leader who failed in family planning would be deemed a total failure regardless of his success in other aspects of his work.

The combination of mandatory targets and heavy penalties makes the Chinese program coercive. Quotas handed down to lower levels are reportedly often unattainable without using coercion, and central authorities excuse coercive measures so long as the quotas are met. Given the stringent population targets adopted through the end of the century and beyond, it is clear that the Chinese leaders have no intention of abandoning forced family planning any time soon.

In fact, they regard the 1991 crackdown as highly successful. Early in 1992, Premier Li Peng announced that the 1991 birth rate had fallen seven percent from the year before. By 1994, the birth rate was down more than 16 percent from the 1990 level. Since 1992, Chinese fertility has actually been below the rate needed to keep the population constant over the long run. In October 1995, it was announced that population growth in China was actually below the state targets from 1991 through 1994 and could be as much as 15 million persons below target by the end of 1995. Still, the authorities warn the local cadres not to relax their family planning enforcement.

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Chinese leaders now openly acknowledge in the domestic media that their present low birth rates have been attained by coercive means. In March 1994, Peng Peiyun, China's birth control chief, admitted that family planning in rural areas was being carried out "mainly through powerful executive measures," and that "if there was any relaxation in this sector, the birth rate would soon [rise] further." Other sources were even more forthright. In April 1993, an article in a Beijing law journal argued that in implementing China's family planning policies "it is impossible to totally avoid using forcible measures in practice" and that such measures needed to be explicitly provided for in Chinese law so that cadres implementing family planning policies would not be deterred by foreign human rights criticisms. In June 1993, an article in the official national family planning journal stated flatly that the reduction in China's rural fertility rate was due to "a coercion-based reduction mechanism." In September 1994, an article in the leading demographic journal said, "It cannot be denied that population control in China is a control model guided by administrative coercion."

STRONG WORDS FOLLOWED BY WEAK ACTIONS SENDING A CONTRARY SIGNAL HAVE BECOME THE STANDARD RESPONSE OF THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION TO HUMAN RIGHTS OFFENSES IN CHINA.

Quite apart from human rights issues, the Chinese family planning program has had some distinctly adverse consequences for Chinese society. For one thing, the one-child policy has caused rising sex ratios in China—the 1990 census reportedly found 114 male infants for every 100 females. The source of this is extensive infanticide of female (or handicapped or otherwise "undesirable") babies, plus sex-selective abortion practiced on a massive scale. According to one Chinese estimate, 98 percent of fetuses currently aborted in China are female.

A sex ratio of 114 to 100 implies that some 800,000 girl babies are eliminated annually in China. According to a Hong Kong source, a 1992 survey found the sex ratio at birth was actually as high as 119 to 100, which would mean 1.1 million missing girls each year. Local sex ratios at birth can run much higher, especially in the cities. A Shanghai source worries that if today's sex ratios continue, China will soon have "an army of bachelors numbering some 70,000,000 strong," a potential cause of real social instability.

The rising incidence of involuntary abortion also has its own adverse consequences for Chinese society. Sources indicate that more than a third of all Chinese pregnancies end in abortion. Abortions are often carried out under unsanitary conditions, without anaesthetic, and by obstetricians who are sometimes abusive or cruel to the women in what seems a deliberate attempt to discourage further pregnancies. These experiences leave scars, both physical and psychological.

Another cause for concern is the rapid aging of the Chinese population, which will ensure that growing numbers of elderly persons must depend for care and financial support on a shrinking number of workers. Among other problems, social security systems may become insolvent.

Even a rise in Chinese fertility starting tomorrow would not compensate for the low birth cohorts of the past 20 years. In solving the supposed "problem" of high fertility, the Chinese authorities have thus created other serious social and economic problems for the future.

They have also generated more political trouble for themselves. One adverse consequence of using coercive family planning measures is a further alienation of the people from the government at a time when political authority is already waning and prospects for domestic order are uncertain. Forced birth control has hardened popular resistance to the point where family planning is now heavily dependent upon compulsory measures, warned a 1994 article in a Chinese demographic journal. It has also given rise to extensive bribery of local officials and falsification of documents and statistics, at a time when official corruption is already a major source of popular dissatisfaction with the current regime.

Despite the new candor in the domestic media about coercion in family planning, the Chinese government continues to insist to foreigners that its family planning program is voluntary. In August 1994, Peng Peiyun repeated in a Xinhua English-language dispatch the official line that "it is a firm policy of the Chinese government to prohibit any kind of coercive action in implementing family planning." In May 1995, she told the English-language *Beijing Review* that the program's success was due to the "understanding and support" of the Chinese people, and added, "we let families become conscious of their own immediate interests and that of the nation, and let them make wise choices according to their own will." In a "white paper" on family planning issued in August 1995, the authorities insisted that "the current family planning policy has won the understanding and support of the whole Chinese people as it is actually a combination of government guidance with the voluntary participation of the masses."

The Chinese leaders know these claims are untrue. Peng Peiyun herself virtually admitted as much to a domestic audience in March 1994, when she said that in rural areas there was "a big gap between the state family planning policy and the desire for having children." But when speaking to the outside world, Chinese officials pretend that popular support for the program is almost universal.

One reason they do this is the gullibility of many in the West. For a decade and a half, most Western demographers, family planners, and foreign aid officials seemed to take no notice of the inhumane aspects of the Chinese program. Before 1993, media reports on family planning in China often referred to the "alleged" coercion in the program as a "controversial" matter, implying that the charges were not proven. Only since 1993 has the international press begun to treat China's coercive population control plan and its utter disregard for human rights as undisputed fact.

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Although the cruelty of the Chinese birth control program is now generally recognized, the reaction of foreign governments and non-government organizations has been incongruously mild. In 1993, the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA)—which has been supporting the program since 1979, the year the one-child policy was adopted—was finally obliged to drop its pretense that birth control in China was "totally voluntary" and even talked briefly about possibly withdrawing from China. Instead, the organization stayed, ostensibly to exert a "moderating influence" on the program. The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) has been sending financial assistance to the Chinese program since 1983, the peak year for coercive birth control surgeries in China. It also steadfastly denied the program's coerciveness until that position became untenable, then quickly adopted the UNFPA's "moderating influence" posture.

In all the years of their involvement, however, there has been little moderation in the program for which these organizations could claim credit. If anything, the "influence" of foreign participants has been to encourage the Chinese authorities in the view that they can use coercive measures without risking worldwide condemnation. The Chinese interpret foreign participation in their program as evidence of approval, and officials of the UNFPA and the IPPF have confirmed that interpretation by lavishly praising its methods and results. If the UNFPA and the IPPF had been sincere in their claim to support only voluntary family planning, they would never have become involved in the Chinese program in the first place and would have condemned its excesses.

When the coercion in the program became undeniable in 1993, statements of protest were issued by the Clinton administration. Yet President Clinton then went on to restore U.S. funding for the UNFPA—withheld since 1985 by the Reagan and Bush administrations because of the UNFPA's support for the Chinese program. Clinton worked out a face-saving provision with the UNFPA under which no U.S. funds would go directly to China. Most European governments, meanwhile, have been even more eager than the Clinton White House to aid and abet the Chinese. Some increased their contributions to the UNFPA to compensate for the loss of U. S. funding during the Reagan-Bush years.

The insensitivity of world governments to the inhumane Chinese program is also evident in the cavalier treatment of Chinese nationals under threat of forced sterilization or abortion who seek asylum abroad. In the U.S., for example, a 1989 immigration board ruling known as *Matter of Chang* establishes as current policy the idea that coercive national family planning programs do not constitute "persecution" so long as they are enforced on everyone, not just particular ethnic, religious, or political groups. Therefore asylum is not granted to Chinese refugees facing forced abortion or sterilization if returned to China. *Matter of Chang* even argues that China's program is justified by the size of the Chinese population and because "China was encouraged by world opinion to take measures to control its population." Advisory documents issued by the U. S. Department of State for use by immigration judges ignore the overwhelming evidence of coercion in the Chinese family planning program.

Frustrated by the refusal of Clinton administration officials to consider the asylum applications of several Chinese women currently seeking protection in the U.S., the Subcommittee on International Relations and Human Rights of the House Committee on International Relations held hearings in May, June, and July of 1995. Testimony was taken from, among others, four asylum seekers, led into the hearing room in handcuffs by immigration police. They told in detail of being dragged from their homes to undergo mandatory abortions and sterilizations before fleeing their homeland. One couple had been threatened with forced sterilization because they had retrieved and kept alive a baby girl found abandoned in the street.

Recently, a group of Chinese women who have been imprisoned in California for two years since arriving in the U.S. as refugees conducted a 50-day hunger strike to protest their pending deportation back to China. Members of Congress have asked President Clinton to grant them asylum, but he has refused. Attempts by the Congress to overrule *Matter of Chang* with legislation have so far also been stymied; a House-passed legislation to grant asylum to refugees from the Chinese program is currently being blocked in the Senate. As a result, the U.S. continues to send Chinese refugees back home to be sterilized and undergo abortion against their will. Aside from making our government an accomplice of the Chinese program, such actions encourage the Chinese leaders to believe that the rest of the world doesn't really care what they do to their own people.

Strong words followed by weak actions sending a contrary signal have become the standard response of the Clinton administration to human rights offenses in China. Other countries seem to be following the same model, except that they often omit the strong words. There are at least two reasons for this. One is that the unsubstantiated but widely held belief in a world population crisis has dulled public outrage over violations of reproductive freedom in China. A second reason is that business interests intent on seeking profits by investing in China's booming economy do not want to risk strained relations with China over its human rights violations.

The result: most Western governments have done scandalously little to discourage coercive family planning in China. Observing their inaction, China's rulers apparently now feel free to expand tyrannical practices not only in birth control but also in the treatment of political dissidents. Although Chinese leaders say publicly that foreign criticism of China's human rights record is interference in their country's internal affairs that will not be accepted, China has in practice shown itself to be extremely sensitive to determined criticism backed by potential actions.

To show that our disapproval of Chinese human rights violations in China is serious, the U.S. should amend our immigration laws to recognize persecution under compulsory family planning programs as a basis for granting asylum. And we should withhold all funding from the UNFPA, IPPF, and any other organization that provides assistance to China's harsh birth control program.

Both provisions are contained in a bill passed last spring by the U. S. House of Representatives, H.R. 1561. The corresponding Senate bill (S. 908) does not contain these measures at the moment, but they may be reinstated in the conference version of the legislation. The two bills go to conference in February. If Americans who feel strongly about this issue demand action from their representatives, a new law placing the U.S. government on the side of China's victims could be in place in a matter of weeks.

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THE GOVERNMENT AS Gambling PARTNER

BY BLAKE HURST

Over the last few years, 48 states have become official sponsors of some form of gambling. Usually, the claim is that high-rollers—or at least tourists from out of state—will come in and provide jobs, tax revenue, and, well, maybe a little glamour.

But instead of attracting James Bond or Grace Kelly, state gambling operations more often pull in people like "Betsy," a widow in our small town who uses her credit cards to float $500 a week in gambling losses. Or "Joe," a member of my pastor's former congregation who recently declared bankruptcy after buying over $40,000 in lottery tickets, getting the money from cash advances on his credit card. The gambling habits of Betsy and Joe are not glamorous, but tawdry, and more than a little sad. The people gambling away money today with state encouragement aren't tourists, they're neighbors. And the games they play are, more often than not, the equivalent of rolling snake eyes.

"When you play the Lottery, Iowa wins." That's the tag line on each advertisement for the Iowa lottery, and at least it's honest, if not particularly appealing. ("When you gamble at Trump's, Marla buys more furs" would not seem to be a good way for Donald to increase his handle.) Missouri's ads read, "You can't win if you don't play." Well, I guess that's true, but your chances are only marginally improved if you do play. The odds against winning a dollar in Missouri's Powerball game are 84 to one. The chances of winning the jackpot are 54 million to one. But over $400 million were spent last year in Missouri on lottery tickets, so the advertisements must be effective. Nationally, close to $40 billion is now spent on lottery tickets each year, and the advertising campaigns costing upwards of $400 million that fuel those ticket purchases are a national scandal. Joshua Shenk points out in a recent article in the *Washington Monthly* that lottery advertisements are the only form of advertising not regulated by truth-in-advertising laws. Billboards in the poorest areas of Chicago read, "This could be your ticket out." Can you imagine the uproar if a private company embarked upon an advertising campaign that cynical?

The fear that somewhere, someone might be crossing a state line with money in his pocket has galvanized state legislators to compete with neighboring states by allowing more and more forms of gambling, usually beginning with the lottery then moving toward more lucrative forms of wagering As recently as 1988, only Nevada and Atlantic City allowed casino gambling. Today, 23 states have legalized casinos, and 70 Indian reservations are home to casino gambling. Casino gambling revenues nearly doubled from 1988 to 1994.

Iowa was the first state to legalize riverboat gambling. Proponents sold gambling as a way to solve the economic problems of Iowa's river communities. Gambling would be isolated on the river, and after all, weren't riverboat gamblers, with their handlebar mustaches and white straw hats, sort of romantic? As originally enacted, Iowa gamblers could only bet $200 per cruise, with a $5 limit per bet. Iowa dropped her betting limits soon after Illinois, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Missouri legalized riverboat gambling. The state of Mississippi has 23 casinos and gambling revenues in the state are greater than all other retail sales. Many "riverboats" don't cruise anymore. Harrah's riverboat in Kansas City isn't even on the river. Instead, the "boat" floats in a man-made pond. The cruises were originally intended to allow the states to regulate both the length of time spent gambling and the losses by gamblers, as well as to segregate gambling from nearby communities. But those regulations cost the states revenue and are in the process of being thrown overboard.

In 1988, Congress passed the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act. Today, over $6 billion is gambled at Native American casinos. Connecticut's Foxwood Casino, owned by the Pequot tribe, is the biggest casino in the Western Hemisphere, with $800 million wagered annually. The Indian Gaming Act allows states to negotiate what games are allowable and how the loot is to be split with the Indian tribes. Connecticut's negotiations resulted in a $135 million windfall for the state in 1994, with an expected $150 million this year. Not to be outdone, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and New York are looking for Indian tribes of their own. It doesn't take a very large tribe. Twenty years ago, only one Pequot grandmother was living where the casino is now located. In

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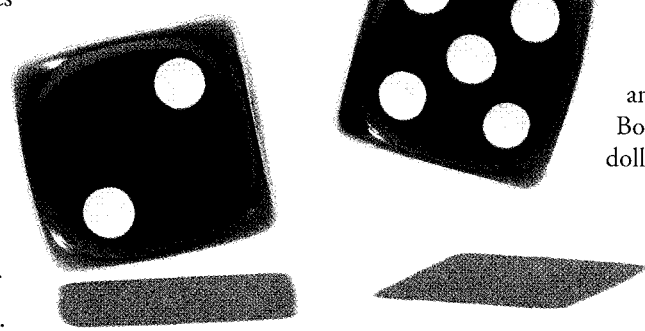
Minnesota, each of the 100-odd members of the Mdewakanton Dakota tribe receives an annual check for $450,000 from the profits of the tribe's Mystic Lake Casino. In the Midwest, gambling profits have forced the Sac-Fox tribe to draw up strict regulations governing the percentage of Indian blood that entitles prospective Native Americans to a cut of the gambling revenues.

Larry Stobbs is mayor of St. Joseph, Missouri, a city that's home to one of Missouri's six riverboat casinos. The casino is profitable, but Stobbs is a little disgusted with the gamblers who come there. In fact, he insists that local businesses around the casino have not benefited from its presence: "People don't want to stay in a hotel that charges over $10 a night, because they want to spend all of their money at the casino."

Casino gambling has been sold as the answer to economic problems everywhere it has been tried. But casinos serve as a gigantic sump, sucking sales from surrounding businesses. Manny Lopez, for example, owns a restaurant in Kansas City, and his sales have dropped 30 percent since a riverboat opened nearby. In 1994, the Illinois Better Government Association surveyed 324 businesses near riverboats. Fifty-one percent reported no increase in sales from gambling-related customers, and 12 percent reported a decline in sales. Ronald Reno, in a report for Focus on the Family, writes that the *Chicago Tribune* polled 25 businesses after a riverboat casino opened near Aurora, Illinois. Only three of those businesses attributed an increase in sales to casino-related customers. Four businesses that had closed blamed their failure on problems caused by the casino.

University of Illinois economist Earl Grinols studied the effects of riverboat gambling and found that "the net effect of gambling was that roughly one job was lost for each gambling job created." People who spend money at a casino can't spend it at McDonald's, or the ballpark, or the amusement park. Gambling cannibalizes existing businesses, and the overall economic benefit to the economy is nil.

Of course, if the competition for consumers' carefully budgeted entertainment dollars were the only issue at stake, the case against gambling would be harder to make. But not all gambling revenues come from folks who just want a night on the town. Estimates of the number of problem gamblers range from 2 percent of the adult population to over 10 percent, but their numbers clearly are large, and increasing with the advent of readily available legal gambling.



Dial 1-800-BETS-OFF and you can talk to the state of Iowa's gambling therapists. This number for a hot line for gambling addicts sometimes appears on our local radio station immediately after an ad for Powerball, the latest lottery game. No one seems the least bit uncomfortable with the juxtaposition. They should be. Calls to Iowa's hot line have increased by 60 percent in the past five years. One of the around-the-clock counselors who answer the number earned her empathy the hard way: on the last hand of cards she played, she lost $65,000.

Maryland estimates that problem gamblers cost the state $1.5 billion annually, and the total indebtedness of pathological gamblers in Maryland is over $4 billion. University of Massachusetts professor Robert Goodman writes in the *Wilson Quarterly* that the societal costs imposed by each problem gambler are over $13,000, with some estimates running as high as $52,000 annually. Gamblers Anonymous estimates there are 6 to 10 million problem gamblers in the U.S.

John Kindt of the University of Illinois says that "current data show that when gambling activities are legalized, economies will be plagued with 100 percent to 550 percent increases in the numbers of addicted gamblers." Ronald Reno quotes from a survey of pathological gamblers that found that 75 percent of pathological gamblers have committed a felony to support their habit. Henry Lesieur, a criminal justice expert at Illinois State University, says that problem gamblers engage in $1.3 billion of insurance fraud yearly. Which is not surprising, as Lesieur also estimates that the average gambler with a problem has from $53,000 to $92,000 in gambling-related debts.

As Speaker, Bob Griffin had ruled the Missouri House of Representatives forever, but because of his association with the gambling industry, his tenure is now over. His influence peddling for gambling interests taxed the patience of Missouri's Attorney General, and Griffin is under investigation by a grand jury. Griffin sent a letter to Sahara Gaming Corp. soliciting a $16 million share of its proposed casino for a client of his. Griffin maintains he was only acting as a lawyer, and Sahara couldn't possibly have felt threatened by his position as Speaker of the Missouri House, with life or death power over gambling legislation. Elsewhere, according to Rep. Frank Wolf (R-Va.), four state senators in Louisiana are under FBI investigation for influence peddling involving the gambling industry. Seventeen South Carolina legislators were convicted in 1991 in a gambling-related FBI sting operation. Six Arizona legislators pled guilty to accepting bribes to ensure passage of a bill to legalize casino gambling.

Gambling interests also spend huge amounts in legal contributions to politicians. Bob Dole recently raised nearly a half-million dollars at a fundraiser hosted by the owner of Las Vegas's Mirage Resort. The Republican party received $1 million in direct contributions in the last election cycle, and millions more were spent to ensure passage of pro-gambling referenda. In the 1992 election cycle, according to *Roll Call,* the Democrats led Republicans in fundraising from gambling interests, but casino owners, unlike their patrons, like to back winners.

In an attempt to cut out the middleman, three Indian tribes in Washington state recently backed a referendum to distribute 10 percent of gambling-related profits directly to each registered voter in the state. Each year voters might have received as much as $100

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apiece. Though the initiative was defeated, whatever the proposal lacked in good taste, it made up in honesty.

Keno is legal in Nebraska. For the uninitiated, keno involves sitting in a large, well-lit room and watching numbers posted on television monitors hung around the wall. If the numbers you circle on your tablet with a crayon are the same as they appear on the screen, you win. Brownville, Nebraska, a town of about 300 people near my home, has a keno parlor. During a recent visit, I was struck by the overall shabbiness of the place. The walls were peeling, stuffing poked through the upholstery, the food we ordered was cold—and the place was packed.

I knew almost everybody there. The guy at the next table was the janitor when I was in high school. A retired checker from the local grocery store is obviously a regular, and the lady who used to work at the local doctor's office was there too. The woman at a nearby table is a farmer's wife from just down the road. The folks whom I saw at the keno parlor are representative of gamblers nationwide. A study from the University of Nebraska found that "those at or below the poverty rate spent 7 percent of their family income on gambling, while those with middle and upper incomes spent only 2 to 3 percent of their income on gambling." A New York study found that in one poor section of Buffalo, residents spent 7.4 percent of their household income on the state lottery. In some lower-income suburbs in Illinois, the average household spends nearly $100 a month on the lottery.

William Thompson, in a study of gamblers at Wisconsin casinos, found that nearly a third of gamblers had incomes less than $20,000 per year. Only 13 percent of gamblers earned more than $60,000. In Minnesota, where welfare recipients can receive their benefits electronically, ATMs inside casinos pay out over $400,000 in welfare benefits annually.

Atchison County, Missouri, where I live, is a small rural county with a population of just 7,000, yet sales of lottery tickets here are $700,000 annually, two percent of all retail sales in the county. We live just 80 miles from riverboat gambling in St. Joseph, and 90 miles from horse racing, dog racing, and casinos in Omaha, Nebraska, and Council Bluffs, Iowa. Gambling has become the most ubiquitous form of entertainment in the area. Though gambling was sold to our communities as a way to increase tourism and bring money in from outside the local area, Brownville, Nebraska, and St. Joseph, Missouri, are not tourist destinations. The people frequenting establishments in these places are my neighbors, and they are the ones who will be dialing 1-800-BETS-OFF.

Yet despite the willing clientele, there remains much disdain for gambling in the country. Communities in Colorado, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, Rhode Island, Vermont, and other places turned down gambling in 1994. Statewide referenda to legalize casinos failed in four states. Clearly, the public is not as enamored with legalized gambling as the politicians who benefit from gambling revenues.

The economic case against gambling is clear. Gambling doesn't create economic wealth, but rather transfers wealth from existing businesses to those lucky or influential enough to receive gambling monopolies from the state. Gambling increases political corruption and crime, and is a strikingly regressive means of raising revenue. Gambling increases revenues to government, and supporters of legalized gambling are quick to quote the benefits to state coffers. But they never mention the costs of gambling. Platte County, Missouri, receives no funds other than property taxes from the riverboat casino within its boundaries. Developers associated with the casino interests are urging the county to reduce the property taxes that the casino would pay, and to dedicate these taxes to improving the roads leading to the casino. But Platte County must pay the costs of prosecuting the steadily increasing number of people who paper over gambling debts with bad checks. Bankruptcies in Iowa increased nearly 20 percent last year, despite a strong economy. Consumer credit counselors report that gambling plays a role in nearly a fifth of their caseload. Ten years ago, only 2 percent of credit problems were related to gambling. Clearly, the taxes that states receive from legalized gambling are only one side of the ledger.

"People would be gambling with or without the lottery," insisted a New York state lottery official recently. But during a typical evening there are ten TV commercials for the New York state lottery within a two-hour span. Either the $23 million that New York spends on lottery advertising is totally ineffective, in which case it should be stopped, or lottery officials in New York and elsewhere are lying when they say they don't create gambling that wouldn't otherwise take place.

I can say this: there weren't a lot of numbers runners here in Atchison County until the state of Missouri and the local grocery store got into the business. When the state removes the stigma from gambling by promoting it as a way to help education, people who have never gambled develop the habit. Governments may not be able to control vice, but surely they ought not encourage it. Yet that is exactly what they are now doing. As George Will summarizes, state sponsorship of lotteries and other gambling has changed the status of gambling in just one generation from "social disease to social policy."

When governments present riverboat casinos as economic development, they diminish those who build farms and factories. When states spend millions urging their citizens to play the lottery, they devalue the efforts of those who work hard and invest wisely. "The pot's 11 million, so I called in sick to work," goes Mary Chapin Carpenter's song "I Feel Lucky."

"The way to get rich is a jackpot, not a job.... The route to the top is a scratch-off ticket, not scratching for success.... Work, thrift, prudence—who needs them? Math is hard; circling numbers with a crayon is easy." Are these lessons we should be teaching our children? One of the most disturbing things about today's love affair with the quick buck is what it says about the moral sturdiness of democratic government in the late twentieth century.

Blake Hurst is a Missourian who writes often for The American Enterprise.

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Transcript

Words worth repeating

RIDING THE POPULIST TIGER

In December, political writer and commentator George F. Will delivered the Francis Boyer Lecture to the annual dinner of the American Enterprise Institute. Following is a brief summary of a portion of his address.

The change that made government not merely big in America but also bad for the nation's soul was a change of mind.

The Framers believed individuals are endowed with natural rights essential to the pursuit of happiness, and that governments are instituted to secure those rights—not to secure happiness. Then in 1932, the Democratic Party's presidential nominee said, "I have…described the spirit of my program as a 'new deal'…a changed concept of the duty and responsibility of government." Said Roosevelt: "Government has a final responsibility for the well-being of its citizens."

To the growing list of citizens' entitlements, FDR added an entitlement to a mental state—a sense of security. He said equal political rights no longer ensured "equality in the pursuit of happiness," so there must be a "second Bill of Rights," including rights to "a useful and remunerative job," "adequate" food, clothing, and recreation, "good" education, "decent" homes, a "decent" living for farmers, and so forth. All these rights, and myriad others that would be enumerated as the years rolled by, were required, he said, because "necessitous men are not free men."

In this way, government's new task became nothing less than the conquest of necessity. Twenty years later, the Democratic presidential nomination was accepted by a man who planned to complete Roosevelt's project. Lyndon Johnson said to his party's 1964 convention: "This Nation…has man's first chance to build the Great Society—a place where the meaning of man's life matches the marvels of man's labor." It was going be hard to top that entitlement—the right to a meaningful life.

Another 20 years later, the Democratic Party gave its presidential nomination to Walter Mondale. In his concession statement after losing 49 states, Mondale said his thoughts were with all those in need of caring government, including "the poor, the unemployed, the elderly, the handicapped, the helpless, and the sad." By 1984, sadness, too, qualified as a public concern.

New Deal liberalism was concerned with who gets what, when, where, and how. Liberalism in its new phase was concerned with who thinks what, who acts when, who lives where, and who feels how. Especially if you feel insecure. Or sad. How did liberalism annihilate all sense of limits on government's responsibilities and competence? What was new was the idea that government could and should master "the world." The assumption was that because government frames society, government is complicit in, and morally responsible for, all social outcomes, and should make them come out right.

But this notion erases the very distinction on which classical liberalism, the liberalism of John Locke and the American Revolution, was founded—the distinction between the public and the private spheres of life. On this distinction, freedom depends. What moderation, what restraint can there be in a government animated by the idea that emancipation from necessity is the task of a compassionate state?

Not surprisingly, such government has metastasized recklessly, and conservatism has risen on a tide of reaction against its overreaching and hubris. But life in this target-rich environment has been a bit too easy for conservatism. With so many lurid faults to liberalism, conservatism has not had to ask itself certain hard questions about what it ought to be telling people that they might not want to hear.

The central political problem facing conservatives is to convince the public to accept a government that refuses to fulfill—and even censors—many of their desires. And if a popularly-elected government is to be strong enough to say no to popular desires, it must be honored. If our constitutional government is to be honored, the Constitution must be regarded as something grander than a mere framework for competing forms of willfulness. The conservative agenda of governmental restraint thus depends on government's having the authority that comes from respect. And respect is never accorded to the servile.

Conservatives must therefore drop their populist rhetoric about making government more "responsive." And they must abandon their populist posture, which has them living with their ears to the ground. As Churchill said, it is hard to look up to someone in that position.

Riding a wave of antigovernment opinion, conservatives like to think their mission is merely to remove impediments to popular opinion. Their real mission, however, is (in the language of *The Federalist)* to "enlarge and refine" opinion. They must keep in mind that government is both agent and shaper of the people.

Constitutional government depends on restraints that do not come easily. The search for restraint is an American constant. Liberalism is not helpful in that search, for it was born when the primary enemies of freedom were forces of order—oppressive governments and established churches. Hence liberalism's breezy faith that the good life would flourish when the last king had been strangled in the entrails of the last priest. Today we know it is not that simple. We know that the good life is menaced by forces of disorder and that big government has become one of those forces.

Fortunately, conservatism is on the case in the 1990s. We shall see if conservatism can give constitutional dignity to its message.

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In Real Life

THE DAILY WORK OF AMERICANS

SPECIALLY ILL-EDUCATED

By T. Kelly Rossiter

I'm a teacher at my local junior high, but I don't educate. Instead, I watch helplessly as a small group of students wreak havoc. This damage is the result of two well-intentioned federal laws: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and IDEA, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1975. IDEA seeks to incorporate disabled students into the regular curriculum. Section 504 expands the traditional definition of "disabled." In combination, these laws create a reaction more explosive than anything ever seen in chemistry class.

Suddenly, students with a very loosely defined set of "behavioral difficulties" receive civil rights protection, and can't be disciplined for these "difficulties." Fearing the wrath of parental advocacy groups and their lawyers, schools nationwide have been brought to an educational standstill.

Specifically, IDEA states that handicapped students must be placed in the "least restrictive environment," so that, "to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are educated with children who are not disabled." Placing them in mainstream classrooms has worked many wonders; handicapped children receive the confidence and encouragement they need to maximize their talents, and non-handicapped students benefit from the unique insights handicapped students can provide.

But when I say "handicapped," what image comes to mind? Blind, autistic, epileptic? I can't tell you how many miles I've walked shadowing my charges while they destroy school property, bang on classroom windows, and scream obscenities to both students and staff. These students are not mobility-limited, blind, or mute. No, they're what Section 504 terms "behaviorally disabled," a loose category of students who receive the educational equivalent of diplomatic immunity.

So what constitutes a "behavioral disability"? To quote my district's psychological evaluation form, "Section 504 does not set forth a list of specific diseases and conditions…because of the difficulty in ensuring the comprehensiveness of such a list." Among the general guidelines offered instead: "An inability to learn which cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.... Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances."

Certainly some student misbehavior can be traced to an actual physiological affliction, but most "inappropriate behavior" I see is exhibited by students who have control over their actions.

Section 504 and IDEA have been around since the mid-1970s, so why the sudden turmoil? It's your tax dollars and the legal system hard at work. Parent advocacy groups backed by phalanxes of attorneys and funding from the Department of Education are prodding parents to sue. Many whose children misbehave are more than happy to blame the schools. So you get scenarios like the one in California's Ocean View School District: Jimmy P., a student with a communicative disorder, has a history of attacking students, kicking staff members, and biting teachers. Claiming the school set him up for failure, Jimmy P.'s father refused to allow him to be removed from mainstream classrooms. The school sought an injunction to override his objection. Though the injunction passed in state court, a federal court overruled it, saying the injuries caused by Jimmy were not serious enough to warrant removal.

With courts handing down decisions like these, school districts like mine are loathe to risk a legal battle. Instead, common stop-gap measures to placate parents while preserving the educational environment include providing personal teachers for schooling at home, or individual aides to accompany students throughout the school day. Both are enormously expensive, and, as my school has discovered, neither one is effective.

I've seen teenagers who failed all their classes because they refused to open a book. Who smashed a picture frame because they "were pissed off." Who told the school principal to "go f––k your slutty mother." Even with an army of aides it's impossible to prevent this behavior, when "behaviorally disabled" students know that no disciplinary measures can be taken. But it's happening now with your tax dollars, in your schools, in the name of civil rights.

According to many of my students, I'm a dumb s––head. But I'm smart enough to recognize that today's special ed. practices are a tragedy. The exorbitant price tag on current special education takes funds away from other worthy students. Mainstream classes are dragged down by classroom chaos. And "behaviorally disabled" students are excused from any responsibility for their actions, on civil rights grounds.

Recently, while trying to talk one of my students I'll call "Mark" down from his desktop perch, where he stood simulating masturbation in front of the class, I heard this explanation: "Don't lecture me. I'm behaviorally disabled, I can't listen to lectures, they make me angry. And I can't control my anger." Neither can I, Mark. Neither can I.

T. Kelly Rossiter lives and teaches near Seattle, Washington.

ART LOVER SURVIVES GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

By Paul A. Cantor

What's an art-lover to do when a feud between the President and Congress shuts down the largest complex of museums in the United States? I had to be in Washington in early November and showed up early to see the highly touted Winslow

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Homer and Johannes Vermeer exhibitions at the National Gallery. In recent years my passion for going to museums has begun to border on an addiction. My friends have begun to worry about me, especially after I reported that during a recent trip to Spain I visited 25 museums in 15 days. When you start going to places like the Museum of the Convent of the Royal Barefoot Nuns in Madrid, I suppose your friends do have cause for concern.

When not traveling abroad, I count on the National Gallery to supply my fixes of great art. But this November, I faced a serious conflict between my political and my aesthetic principles. As a political conservative, I took a visceral pleasure in seeing the government shut down, but that meant that I had no hope of getting into the National Gallery. The thought of 21 Vermeers waiting to be looked at but behind locked gates was driving me crazy.

Then I realized I should stop passively depending on the federal government to satisfy my craving. In all my years of going to free blockbuster exhibitions at the National Gallery, I had been neglecting the Phillips Collection. When I called their number, the recorded message proudly proclaimed: "The Phillips Collection, a non-government institution, *is* open today."

The Phillips turned out to be a shining example of what private initiative can do in the world of the arts. First opened in 1921 by steel heir Duncan Phillips, the institution bills itself as "the first museum of modern art in the United States." Its diverse collection is remarkably high in quality, including one of the most vivid Renoirs I have ever seen, several electric Van Goghs, and one El Greco almost as good as any I saw in Spain. The American collection is a particular tribute to Phillips' taste and includes works by artists he personally patronized, such as Georgia O'Keeffe.

After visiting the Phillips I could not think of any other private museum I had not already seen. Much to my chagrin, I realized I would have to rely on the generosity of foreign governments. The Canadian embassy has a small gallery for mounting exhibitions of its country's artists. This time the embassy was featuring paintings by Cornelius Krieghoff, a nineteenth-century regionalist genre painter whose work I knew from an exhibition at the Beaverbrook Art Gallery in Fredericton, New Brunswick.

Krieghoff was born a Dutchman, and he painted quaint interiors in loving detail, but I will be the first to admit that he is no Vermeer. Still, I relished the opportunity to see 30 of his works. Relieved that Canadian authorities had not gone on a sympathy strike with their NAFTA trading partner, I decided to test the spirit of hemispheric solidarity and set off for the Art Museum of the Americas, run by the Organization of American States. They had an exhibition of 24 recent paintings by the Japanese-Brazilian artist Tomie Ohtake, a non-representational painter whose sense of color, form, and composition I found impressive.

I then serendipitously stumbled upon the Museum of the American Architectural Foundation in the Octagon House (where President Madison lived after the British burned the White House in the mother of all government shutdowns). This being Washington—where numbers generally are inflated—the Octagon House in fact has only six sides. Of all the museums I visited, it proved to be the most educational. Its exhibition, "The Growth of Early Washington, D.C.: Southern City/National Ambition," could not avoid chronicling a pattern of political ambition and economic overreaching that helps explain why the federal government now finds itself in financial turmoil. For example, one exhibit shows how, in an 1828 effort to win trade away from New York, Washington began building a canal system to Lake Erie. Having borrowed a million dollars from the federal government, the city failed to anticipate that railroads were going to replace canals, and ended up nearly bankrupt.

The public museums of Washington are a national treasure. But we shouldn't forget that those gleaming white marble buildings are monuments to the imperial ambitions of the capital city, its tendency to aggrandize itself at the expense of the rest of the country. If it takes a few museum closings to teach that lesson, then, as painful as it is for me, I will settle for Krieghoffs in place of Vermeers.

Paul A. Cantor is a professor of English at the University of Virginia.

HAUNTED BY THE '60s

By Raymond Wisher

I recently stopped a 14-year-old girl driving a car with no license and a bad tag. When she found out she was being arrested, she started crying and asked, "Is this why they call you pigs?" "No," I answered, "we were called pigs in the '60s by a crowd whose main interests were getting high rather than working, protesting a war their countrymen were dying in, complaining about the government while taking its money, and basically acting like pieces of dirt. The police were trying to maintain some control and peace in society, and for that we were called pigs."

I found out she was driving a group of boys around while they broke into houses. Asked why she did it, she matter-of-factly answered, "I need things." It turned out she was enrolled at Bells, a private, yuppie, alternative school for kids who can't "adjust" to normal school disciplines. They don't ask the kids to excel, just to feel good about themselves. Students only have to attend classes once a week; the rest of the time they work on their own. They have tests, but if the students get things wrong, the teachers let them keep trying until they either get it right or feel good enough about themselves to quit. But I digress.

I'm kinda staring at her. Fourteen years old, and so self-obsessed as to ignore all but her own immediate needs. I asked, "What about the people whose stuff you ripped off? Don't they count? What are they, some kind of food source?" She replied, "What about them?", then brightened up at my "food source" description. I gave up.

It frustrates me that many people seem surprised to see social order slipping. Take any structure supported by several main beams, gnaw away at each of them, and soon the structure will fall. If you water down education, attack the family, scorn religion, undermine the law, what do you think will happen?

The '60s has grown up and bitten us in the ass.

Raymond Wisher is a Florida police detective.

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Are Media Mergers a Menace?

By William B. Shew

Anything you can do, we can do bigger. That's what media companies seem to be saying to each other these days, as more succumb to the urge to merge. Almost every company of consequence in the converging entertainment, telephone, and computer industries has at least flirted with merger.

Many have done more than flirt. Viacom, Paramount, and Blockbuster are now one company, as are Disney, Cap Cities, and ABC. Time Warner and Turner Broadcasting are awaiting regulatory approval to join forces, even as Time and Warner still struggle to become a coherent whole.

Mergers, of course, are not the only restructuring occurring in these industries. A host of joint ventures and strategic alliances has been announced, with more certain to come. Rupert Murdoch's NewsCorp has joined with MCI to combine the latter's delivery systems with the former's enormous library of films and television programs. Microsoft and NBC have formed a joint venture to establish a 24-hour news and information channel, complemented by an on-line interactive news service. And TCI, ABC, and Fox are rumored to be considering joining forces to create their own around-the-clock news service.

Whether all of this to-ing and fro-ing makes commercial sense is difficult to say. Many observers think that Time Warner's marriage to Turner Broadcasting will end in tears—or at least red ink. So many potential competitors of CNN are coming out of the woodwork that Time Warner may have acquired the network in its final days of unchallenged domination of the 24-hour news business. Doubts have also been raised about Disney's acquisition of ABC, partly because of the steep price the Mouseketeers paid, partly because many observers think that the ego of Disney boss Michael Eisner had more to do with the deal than any analysis of financial spread sheets.

But whether the mergers and joint ventures enrich or disappoint shareholders should not be of great concern to policy wonks. Not, at least, as long as the mergers do not substantially lessen media competition or diversity. For in that event markets can safely be left to sort out winners from losers, with no need to fear that a Peter Jennings in Mickey Mouse ears might become the sole source of information on world events.

That said, the coupling of media giants is causing some disquiet, and not just in Washington. As content-providers like Paramount and Disney continue to pair off with distributors like Blockbuster and ABC, those companies remaining unattached worry that they will be left out in the cold—content-providers with no access to distribution, and distribution companies with no access to popular content.

Nowhere are those fears more intense than in the business of delivering video and electronic information to the home. The two principal contenders for the job of wiring residences for tomorrow's cornucopia of information and entertainment are telephone and cable TV companies. Telephone companies have the upper hand in the two-way communications necessary to provide sophisticated information services. But in the critical area of entertainment, the comparative advantage goes to cable TV companies, with their fingers on the pulse of the consumer, a high capacity distribution system already in place, and access to popular programming—something the phone companies have lacked.

Hence the interest of Bell Atlantic, Pacific Telesis, and NYNEX in forming a joint venture with Hollywood's Creative Artists Agency to develop new programming. Ameritech and Bell South pursued a similar arrangement with Disney. Other phone companies have chosen to get a foothold in programming through stock purchases: US West spent $2.5 billion to acquire a 25 percent interest in Time Warner, while NYNEX invested $1.2 billion in content-provider Viacom.

A common thread runs through the scramble for merger partners and strategic allies: the fear that access on reasonable terms to distribution and programming could become a thing of the past. Complicating matters, the balance of power between those who distribute programming to consumers and those who produce it is expected to shift—each group fears to its own disadvantage. Being at the mercy of a distribution monopoly is the worst nightmare of programmers. So they worry that signs of intensifying competition among distributors—local phone companies pitted against cable companies, emerging direct-broadcast satellite services, and expansion of local broadcasters through digital compression—may be short-lived, ultimately evolving into the opposite extreme: a single broadband connection providing sole access to most residences. Distributors, for their part, fret that most production could become concentrated in a few hands. Only large conglomerates may be able to bear the risks posed by spiraling production costs and exploit opportunities to transplant material produced for one medium (for instance, cinema) to other media (recorded music, books, etc.).

The expected convergence of entertainment, telecommunications, and computers has also spurred interest in mergers. Visions of the multimedia future conjure up diverse ways of exploiting content, ranging from video-on-demand to interactive versions of films, books, and popular TV programs. In order for distributors to acquire the rights necessary to exploit the hoped-for synergies of packaging programming in a variety of forms, contracts between owners and distributors of programming must become considerably more complex. Companies like Viacom have concluded that purchasing a production company like Paramount will be cheaper than licensing programming from others, with the attendant difficulties and legal expenses of draw-

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ing up suitably far-sighted contracts.

On the other hand, there is an inevitable loss of flexibility when distributor and producer agree to become each other's captive: the distributor has less freedom to search the open market for the best material, just as the producer may have to reject superior exhibition opportunities offered by competing distributors. Moreover, the synergies of bringing software and hardware under the same roof can be greatly overestimated, an expensive lesson Sony learned from acquiring Columbia Pictures and CBS Records. Yet such cautionary tales seem to have done little to quell the mania for media mergers.

All of this suggests that a worrisome increase in media concentration might lie ahead. Most worries about increasing concentration have focused on the electronic media, but cause for concern can also be found in the print media, where the number of cities supporting more than one local newspaper has been in steady if slow decline for many years.

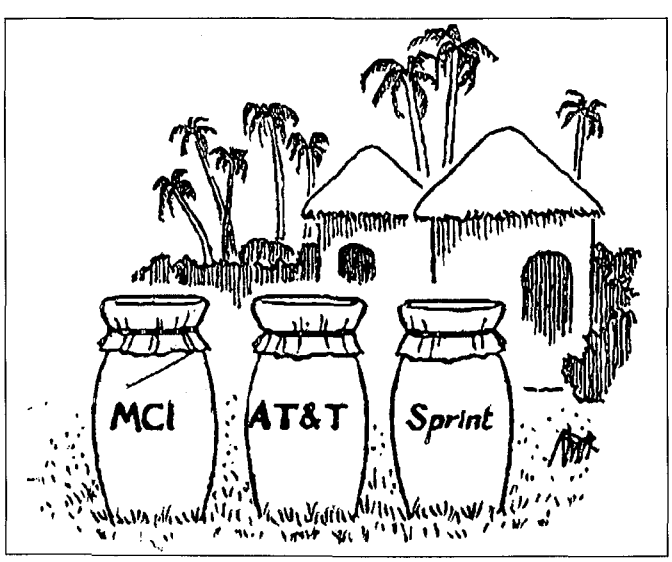
Still, there is little reason to believe that more restrictive media regulation would be in the public interest. Some trends, like the growing scarcity of two-newspaper towns, are as inevitable as they are lamentable. Others, like the increasing integration of different segments of the media, could be reversed by new public policy initiatives, but they are also less threatening than they first appear. For such integration in itself seems unlikely to diminish competition in either the creation or distribution of content—even if companies are foolish enough to imagine that bringing content and conduit under the same roof can somehow relieve them of the need to compete with other media providers.

More importantly, barriers that have traditionally impeded the entry of new firms into the marketplace continue to fall. Witness the ever-growing profusion of cable TV channels, the recent entry of several national providers of direct-to-home satellite TV service, the expected expansion of broadcast TV channels permitted by new digital compression technology, and the competition that is already beginning to emerge between cable TV and local telephone distribution systems as the artificial barriers separating them begin to crumble.

Nor are falling entry barriers confined to the electronic media. Even as the number of newspapers continues its gradual decline—itself a reflection of the intense competition from television—the magazine industry has seen almost a 30 percent increase in the number of titles published over the last 15 years, from roughly 9,600 in 1970 to over 12,000 by 1994.

So it is difficult to believe that the recent spate of media mergers presents a threat to competition. There are simply too many robust media organizations. That, combined with the growing numbers of potential competitors as entry barriers fall, makes the media an unpromising environment for the accumulation of market power.

But even if mergers seem unlikely to increase the economic power of media organizations much, the question remains whether the resulting conglomerates, with their extensive media holdings, may come to exercise excessive influence on public opinion and tastes. In other words, even if they pose no economic threat, might the influence of media conglomerates nevertheless constitute a social threat by reducing media diversity, the lifeblood of a democratic society?



From the *Wall Street Journal*—Permission, Cartoon Features Syndicate

That is a possibility, but not a particularly likely one. For one thing, economic theory suggests that larger media organizations may have an incentive to offer more diverse content than would many tiny organizations, most of which might be drawn to targeting the popular middle of the market. Thus, some reduction in *source* diversity might actually lead to a gain in *content* diversity. More importantly, though, recent mergers are not likely to have an appreciable effect on the number of distinct media voices. Media owners remain too numerous, and the public's media consumption too fragmented, to worry that media diversity will be seriously compromised.

The main challenge to a vigorous and intensely competitive media industry lies elsewhere. It is to be found in public policy that often restrains media competition, first by artificially limiting the number of competitors, and then by restricting the behavior of those firms that are allowed to compete. So, for example, television and radio broadcasting remains the preserve of those fortunate enough to have obtained spectrum licenses through the largess of government bureaucrats: a would-be broadcaster does not have the opportunity to bid against current broadcasters or other spectrum users for the resources necessary to enter the market, as would happen in other industries. Local governments frequently use their franchising powers to prevent the competitive entry into their market of a second cable television system or a second telephone company. Federal regulators are now busy imposing upon broadcasters a new transmission technology (compressed digital signals), an intervention that does not seem well thought out and whose intrusiveness would be unthinkable in most industries. Even more troubling, given the critical role played by the media in a democratic society, is the movement afoot to expand government regulation of media content. It is these policy measures, far more than recent mergers, that pose a threat to media competition and diversity.

William B. Shew is a visiting scholar at AEI and an advisor to industry and government on telecommunications and media policy.

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the Broadcast Economist

Free the Airwaves

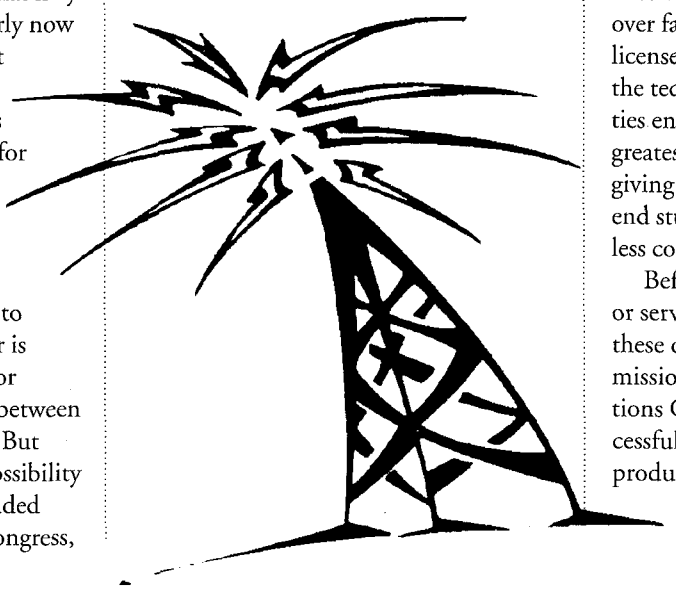
By Thomas W. Hazlett

Top-down regulatory approaches to the allocation of the broadcast spectrum have proceeded more or less undisturbed in this country for 69 years. It's still the Radio Act of 1927 that defines the process whereby radio and television stations gain permission to broadcast. Our current process for allocating broadcast licenses illustrates virtually all of the foibles of government industrial policy—from the persistent bias in favor of industry incumbents, to a penchant for picking losing companies and technologies. But things may be about to change.

For a great debate now rages in Washington, D.C. over the granting of licenses to broadcast High Definition Television (HDTV). Do not be ashamed if you feel out of the loop on this one. America's broadcasters, interested to the tune of about $35 billion, would be happy to have the public leave all questions of radio spectrum allocation to their Washington lobbyists and a few regulators and politicians. But there are some aspects of the Federal Communications Commission's process for assigning TV licenses that may be worth tuning in for—particularly now that Senate Majority leader Robert Dole has threatened to kill any telecommunications reform unless Congress auctions off the licenses for next-generation TV instead of just giving them away.

The *sine qua non* of broadcasting today is the free, government-issued license, a windfall tendered to those worthy souls whose behavior is deemed in the "public interest." For decades, this has led to cozy deals between broadcasters and the government. But two new factors today open the possibility of change. One is that reform-minded Republicans, now in control of Congress, are on the prowl for deficit-reducing cash. The other is the recent groundbreaking use of auctions to award licenses to sellers of "personal communications services," which brought $9 billion into the U.S. Treasury via competitive bidding. A golden opportunity to reverse a lifetime of inefficient radio spectrum policy—including some regulations that have seriously compromised the First Amendment—may now be at hand.

THE ONLY RELIABLE METHOD FOR DISCOVERING BETTER, CONSUMER-PLEASING SERVICES IS TO EXPERIMENT IN THE MARKETPLACE. BUT WITH THE FCC IN CONTROL OF THE RADIO SPECTRUM THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE.



Neither of the major telecommunications bills passed by the two houses of Congress in 1995 grabbed the opportunity to change the way spectrum is allocated, however. Though free-marketeers and Naderite "public interest" groups were both screaming "giveaway," the plan was simply to fork over new HDTV licenses to the current broadcasters. Only at the 11th hour and 59th minute—after the conference committee had announced a final bill and the Clinton administration had agreed to sign it—did Senator Dole enter the picture and threaten to break up the deal.

Dole's stated objection was the unseemliness of handing big media companies something worth billions of dollars in a time of budget austerity. "Corporate welfare" he called it. The deeper problem for consumers, however, is not that the federal regulators would hand over too much but rather that they would hand over far too little. The proposed HDTV license would confine broadcasters to just the technology and business opportunities envisioned today by Washington. The greatest benefit of auctioning rather than giving out broadcast licenses would be to end stultifying central planning in wireless communications.

Before any new wireless technology or service may be offered to the public these days it must first gain explicit permission from the Federal Communications Commission. The applicant, if successful, is allowed to offer only a specific product via a given delivery system. The FCC license is merely a pass to use certain types of transmitting

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equipment. Allocations of the various bands of the radio spectrum continue to be micromanaged by the regulators. A broadcast station is barred from using its license to offer cellular telephone service, and vice versa, though there is no technical bar to doing this.

The only reliable method for discovering better, consumer-pleasing services is to experiment in the marketplace. But with the FCC in control of the radio spectrum this is impossible. An AM radio broadcaster is, for instance, prohibited from converting to higher-quality digital transmissions without a formal FCC rulemaking. At a minimum, that would consume several years and oodles of lawyers and money. Attorneys rather than economic competitors end up scrimmaging, and it's Commissioners, not consumers, who referee.

The bureaucratic inertia of the Commission is buttressed by the private interests of the licensees, who don't want any competition that could lower profitability. Today's regulatory playing field has been designed, lobbied for, and protected by vested interests precisely because it levies a disproportionately large burden on newcomers. Upstart rivals are dealt with harshly by the administrative process.

Policing the nation's airways ought to be a low maintenance task that no more requires bureaucrats to plan each detail than road traffic requires government direction. But because government's allocations of spectrum are manipulated by insiders to limit competition, the Commission ends up enforcing cartels instead of policing traffic. This system combines the inefficiency of socialist planning with the selfishness of monopolism. And it is rigidly protective of outmoded technologies and entrenched firms.

The queue of new technology awaiting FCC permission to go on the market is impressive. Proponents of cellular television want to go head-to-head with cable and local telephone monopolies, but have been bottled up in a formal rulemaking since 1992. Digital satellite radio services—offering CD-quality music and news—have been languishing since 1990. "Wireless cable" has been massively handicapped up by the FCC decision to allot only 33 channels to the service—and thwacked by a ten-year lag in getting even these few licenses assigned. Understandably, other potential service providers have just given up; it's expensive to wait in line. The squandered possibilities are a waste.

There should be no "HDTV license"—that gives the FCC control over the technology, the market, the product. The current HDTV scheme involves an incredible 16-year roll-out. TV stations will be forced to provide simultaneous digital and analog broadcasts until 2008, whereupon everyone should have a new digital TV set. Meanwhile we have no idea how much demand there will be for the somewhat sharper images offered by HDTV. We don't know if consumers would prefer today's lower signal quality if it allowed a wider choice of, say, ten TV signals in the airspace currently set to be allotted to one HDTV channel. No flexibility of this sort is allowed in The Plan cobbled together by the FCC.

THE GREATEST BENEFIT OF AUCTIONING RATHER THAN GIVING OUT BROADCAST LICENSES WOULD BE TO END STULTIFYING CENTRAL PLANNING IN WIRELESS COMMUNICATIONS.

When this ambitious scheme flops terribly, wasting billions of dollars and suppressing more valuable media, who will pay? The policymakers who wreaked disaster will be long gone. (Can you name one FCC member who voted to limit America, quite needlessly, to just three national TV networks in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s? Or one of the regulators who helped delay cellular telephone service by well over a decade in this country, costing the U.S. economy billions?)

What is needed in spectrum allocation today is a system that allows competitors to provide whatever services consumers demand, and requires them to shoulder the financial risks therein. Sort of like capitalism. The way to open the competitive floodgates in this direction is for the FCC to issue broad, flexible spectrum rights instead of today's narrow operating licenses.

Instead of micro-planning HDTV and other uses, the Commission should be allowing firms to provide television signals of the current standard, high definition video, wireless telephone calls, data transfer, or any other service—depending on consumer interest and the costs of supply. The best, quickest, most efficient way to assign such rights is via competitive bidding. Auctioning radio spectrum would allow broadcasters to purchase their inputs the good ol' fashioned way, and resources would travel to wherever they have the greatest consumer value. This would also permit new technologies to enter the marketplace immediately, without bureaucratic barrier. That would, in turn, stimulate research & development in new services, as profits (rather than legal costs) would immediately accrue to those wireless entrepreneurs who innovatively satisfied consumer interests.

In the process of mightily undercutting government control of the airwaves, auctions would also improve First Amendment protections for broadcasting. Because of heavy government oversight, electronic speech enjoys far less protection today than print speech (see Tom West's article on page 55). Getting regulators out of wireless communications will move electronic speech back into the mainstream.

Allowing market forces to assign broadcasting rights will, truly, return freedom to the air.

Thomas Hazlett, a visiting scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, is the former chief economist of the Federal Communications Commission.

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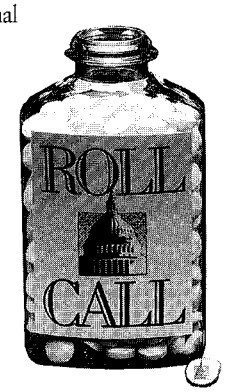

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Flashback

To know nothing of what happened before you were born is to remain ever a child—*Cicero*

Farewell George

Reading Washington's Farewell Address in the Capitol is rather like taping the Sixth Commandment to a lamppost on the corner of Hollywood and Vine.

Each year on George Washington's birthday a member of the Senate reads his Farewell Address—to a largely empty chamber. Perhaps no document of American history is more disregarded than the Farewell Address: its reading in the Capitol is rather like taping the Sixth Commandment to a lamppost on the corner of Hollywood and Vine. And is there an emptier national holiday than "President's Day," which of course falls every year on February the Whateverth?

In 1938, Southern poet Donald Davidson mourned that "the founding fathers…are becoming more and more figures in a book, understandable enough there, but hardly to be conceived as appearing like a Theseus to aid us against the Persians of some national crisis."

The Farewell Address is as close to an archetypal Founder's document as we have. This testament from Washington was produced with the assistance of Hamilton and Madison; reading it, we partake of our first president's distilled wisdom, passed, as it were, directly from his generation to ours. Washington used it to "recommend to your frequent review some sentiments which are the result of much reflection, of no inconsiderable observation, and which appear to me all important to the permanency of your felicity as a people."

The address contains the instructions to posterity of the Father of our Country. Does our heedlessness make us guilty of parricide? Or is the document an anachronism, of no more relevance to us than the Old Testament proscription of usury is to modern-day Christians and Jews? As the TV commercial says, you make the call.

In his valedictory message to his countrymen, George Washington counseled us to do the following:

• "Avoid the necessity of those overgrown military establishments which, under any form of government, are inauspicious to liberty, and which are to be regarded as particularly hostile to republican liberty."

• Avoid, too, "the baneful effects of the spirit of party…It serves always to distract the public councils and enfeeble the public administration. It agitates the community with ill-founded jealousies and false alarms; kindles the animosity of one part against another; foments occasionally riot and insurrection. It opens the door to foreign influence and corruption, which find a facilitated access to the government itself through the channels of party passion."

• Office-holders should "confine themselves within their respective constitutional spheres, avoiding in the exercise of the powers of one department to encroach upon another. The spirit of encroachment tends to consolidate the powers of all the departments in one, and thus to create, whatever the form of government, a real despotism."

• "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports… Where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths which are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice?"

• "Cherish public credit. One method of preserving it is to use it as sparingly as possible, avoiding occasions of expense by cultivating peace…avoiding likewise the accumulation of debt."

• "Excessive partiality for one foreign nation and excessive dislike of another cause those whom they actuate to see danger only on one side."

• "The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is, in extending our external relations to have with them as little *political* connection as possible.… Europe has a set of primary interests which to us have none or a very remote relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns."

• "It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world.… Harmony, liberal intercourse with all nations are recommended by policy, humanity, and interest. But even our commercial policy should hold an equal and impartial hand, neither seeking nor granting exclusive favors or preferences."

Is a single one of these adjurations obeyed in contemporary America? The Farewell Address has not fared well.

—Bill Kauffman

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BookTalk

LYIN' KING

By Theodore Pappas

Only in America: The Life and Crimes of Don King
By Jack Newfield, Morrow, 352 pages, $23

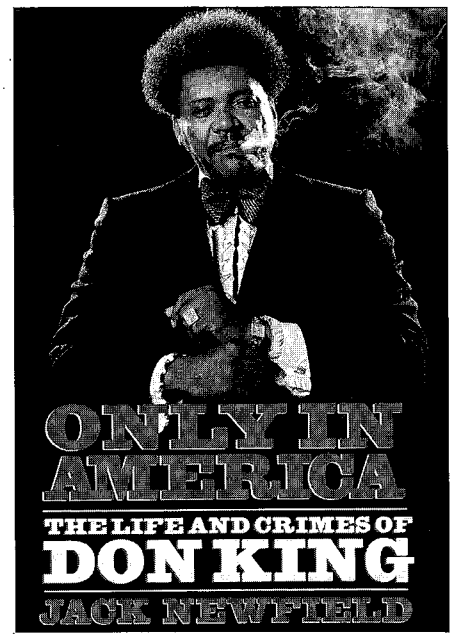
"Don, I'll pay you the money," moaned Sam Garrett. A small sickly man with tuberculosis, Garrett was a perfect match for the 240-pound hustler who had flunked physical education in high school and earned a reputation on Cleveland's East Side for refusing to fight men his size. When the police arrived, King gave Garrett one final kick to the head. Garrett lapsed into a coma and died five days later. "Donald the Kid," as he was called, had stomped a man to death because of a delinquent debt, just as twelve years earlier he had shot and killed a man who tried to raid one of his gambling dens. So begins this picaresque tale of the "life and crimes of Don King."

As a veteran journalist with the *New York Post,* Jack Newfield understands that the link between professional boxing and the underworld of crime was forged long before Don King left prison in 1971 and began his career as a fight promoter in 1972; he knows that gangster Owney Madden controlled heavyweight champion Primo Carnera in the 1930s, that Jake LaMotta took dives in the 1940s, and that mobsters John Vitale and Frankie Carbo owned Sonny Liston in the 1950s. But, as Newfield shows, none of the Runyonesque characters in boxing history ever controlled and corrupted the sport more thoroughly than Don King has since the late 1970s.

Newfield's information is not new. Some of his research was published years ago in the *Village Voice,* and he clearly rehashes information from standard biographies of prominent fighters. But if the chapters, individually, are far from knockouts, the cumulative effect of the narrative—of chronicling in detail the many fights and rankings fixed by King; the numerous kids from the ghetto swindled by King; the sports journalists, boxing officials, and referees bribed by King; and the media moguls, corporate executives, civil-rights leaders, and elected officials who fawn upon King and tolerate his thuggery because of the money he can make them—is staggering all the same. Score it a TKO.

Considering his wealth, pomposity, and famed coiffure (journalist Dick Schaap once quipped, "Don King's body did four years in prison, but his hair got the chair"), it is easy to see why King commands attention. He is the consummate Barnum, the sporting world's Reverend Ike, what attorney Thomas Puccio once described as the "smartest person I ever cross-examined in a trial or a deposition. And I questioned Ivan Boesky." King holds exceptional sway over poor black kids from the inner city, for he knows, in Newfield's words, "their language, their weakness, their psychology. He [knows] how to give them a self-image, an idea of their role in history, how much money they could make if they only had 'proper management'." A master of mind games and circumlocution, King will ingratiate himself with black fighters who have signed with white promoters by distributing copies of a book called *Countering the Conspiracy to Destroy Black Boys.*

By presenting a big pile of cash instead of a check for 50 times as much, King knows, he can cozen the typical street kid into signing virtually anything. Even veteran fighters who should know better have fallen for this tactic. When Muhammad Ali threatened to sue King for the $1.2 million that King had shorted him after his fight with Larry Holmes in 1980, King shrewdly convinced Jeremiah Shabazz, the Muslim minister who had converted Ali to Islam, to visit the fighter in the hospital and to offer him a suitcase filled with $50,000 in exchange for an agreement to drop the lawsuit. Severely brain-damaged even before King had talked him out of retirement and into fighting Holmes, Ali accepted the cash and dropped the suit.



Fighters signing with King often discover that they have actually signed away their entire careers, surrendering control over their future fights and earnings. (The government's recent case against King, which ended in a mistrial, in fact dealt with contract fraud.) The fighter also soon learns that King will charge him exorbitantly for every conceivable expense, from jump rope to protective cup. For instance, for his victory over Frank Bruno in 1986, Tim Witherspoon was promised $550,000. But after King (who made $5 million on the fight) had deducted "expenses," including $275,000 for the fighter's "manager" (i.e., King's stepson Carl), Witherspoon was left

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with a mere $90,000. Mike Tyson has even paid King a bogus $100,000 "sanctioning fee" before his fights.

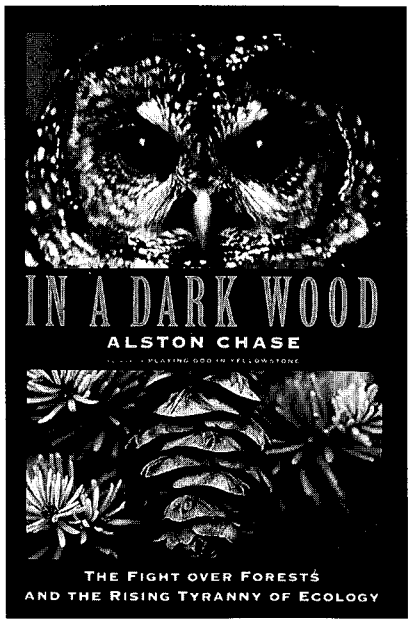
Not surprisingly, over 100 lawsuits have been filed against King since 1978, but only two have been successful. When fighter Ernie Butler threatened to sue, King told him to drop the idea, "or else." When heavyweight champion Larry Holmes threatened to change promoters, King promised to have his legs broken. "Not for a single minute," says Holmes, "did I think it wasn't a real threat." As Newfield puts it, "Boxing is the only sport in which the lions are afraid of the rats."

The rat in this case may have his own predator to fear. King's ties to the Mafia are well-documented, and the FBI knows through informants (such as the Reverend Al Sharpton) that King met with John Gotti in December 1982. According to one source, Gotti slapped King for not "paying his debts to us on time…that guy's got to be taught a lesson and John will take care of it." This wasn't the first time that King had been roughed up. When King tried to swindle Trevor Berbick's promoter, James Cornelius, in 1981, Cornelius and four large friends tracked King down in the Bahamas and administered a professional beating, breaking his nose and punching out teeth.

The FBI believes that King has fleeced his fighters so ruthlessly over the years because he has owed so much money to his silent partner, the mob. Larry Holmes posits a psychological reason: "With Don, it was making money off [fighters], sure, but there was something more to it.... I believe deep-down Don King hates fighters, is jealous of them, because we can do what a fat old bull-shitter like him can't do—and that's fight. That is why he wanted to have such power over us, to humiliate us." Holmes never did like carrying King's luggage through the airports.

Tim Witherspoon, on the other hand, could care less about what ultimately motivates Don King. To him, it's a simple matter of race and robbery: "Don's specialty is black-on-black crime. I'm black and he robbed me."

Theodore Pappas is the managing editor of Chronicles.



CLEARCUTTING ENVIRONMENTALISTS

By Karl Hess, Jr.

In A Dark Wood: The Fight Over Forests and The Rising Tyranny of Ecology, By Alston Chase, Houghton Mifflin, 479 pages, $29.95

In the euphoric afterglow of Earth Day 1970, who could have predicted that a warm and fuzzy species protection act would catapult the Pacific Northwest into social and economic turmoil? Probably no one, though according to Alston Chase the writing was on the wall—or, to be more accurate, nesting high in a tree in a dark wood.

In a Dark Wood is Alston Chase's riveting account of the epic contest between loggers and greens for the ultimate environmental prize: the coastal old-growth forests of northern California and Oregon. These are where the world's tallest trees—the redwood and the Douglas fir—grow, and where the northern spotted owl unleashed the Endangered Species Act and shut down the Northwestern rural economy.

Chase's account of this timber war is intriguing: "It is a tale without heroes or villains, in which the bad guy isn't a person at all but an idea." The idea is biocentrism—the view that all living things have equal value. It is, Chase claims, the battle cry of greens out to topple humanism and science in favor of ecological theory.

Well before the spotted owl felled its first timber harvest, Chase was busy debunking the ecology of natural regulation and other aspects of green cosmology in *Playing God in Yellowstone.* That book is a landmark. It was the first to take the Park Service to task, and it moved me to write *Rocky Times in Rocky Mountain National Park.* But where Chase ascribed Yellowstone's dying willows, aspen, beavers, and grizzlies to the faulty ideas of eco-philosophers, I faulted the political incentives facing the Park Service.

Chase is right that the Pacific timber war took a toll in human suffering. As environmentalists hammered away at timber sales in the courts and through guerrilla protests, men and women lost their jobs, alcoholism and abuse soared, children lost the safety net of functional families, and entire communities fractured. If human sympathy was all that mattered, Chase's book would tower like a Douglas fir. But it isn't—and the book doesn't.

Chase begins by debunking old-growth forests as environmental fantasies and biological deserts. They were rare, he claims, until the advent of fire suppression and the removal of native Americans. Prior to settler meddling, fire swept through western forests at intervals of 80 to 100 years. Nature was in constant rebirth, and old growth was merely a fuel source for forest regeneration.

Chase has the sweep of history right, but the details of forest ecology wrong. Old growth is not a biological desert. True, the forest floor is relatively sterile when 100- to 250 -year-old trees are tightly packed. But as the forest matures, trees die, the canopy opens to sunlight, and a rich diversity of species not found in younger timber emerges. Sadly, Chase's treatment of old growth is stuck in the 100- to 250-year age rut where trees look old but the forest is still young.

A bigger problem is Chase's claim that old growth is uncommon in a natural regime of frequent fires. The Yacoult burn in 1902 and the Tillamook burn in 1933 show how devastating Pacific Northwest fires can be. But the fact is that even in an environment where big fires happen, the dominant age class of unlogged stands of redwood and Douglas

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fir is 450 years or more. Chase is right that more big trees cover the Pacific Northwest today than a century ago. But most of them are under 200 years of age—old enough to be gargantuan but too young to recreate the habitat that covered 70 percent of the region's coastal forests at the time of Anglo settlement.

When Chase attacks ecologists for embracing static models of nature he is dead wrong. Ecologists embrace the same dynamic ecology he does. The only difference is that advocates of old growth want fire, insects, and disease to do what Chase wants to do with timbering. The crux is that Chase abhors waste and inefficiency. Redwood and Douglas fir trees can't last forever, so why not log rather than squander them?

In A Dark Wood is really a manifesto for the Wise Use movement, and an apology for socialism in the name of community stability. Chase believes that government has a duty to save rural logging communities dependent on public lands. To that end, he lashes out at free market critics of subsidized timber sales.

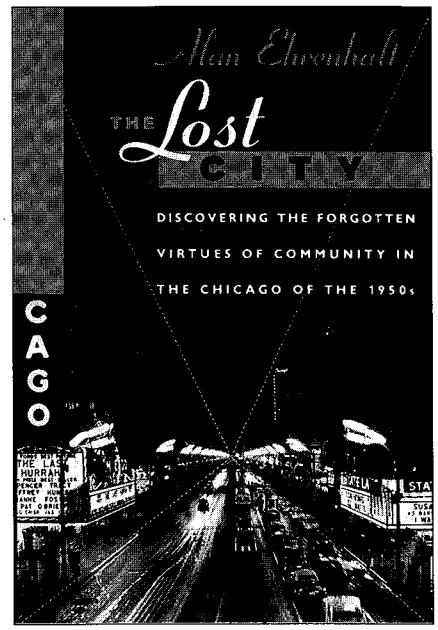
Chase bogs down in eco-bashing. By innuendo (noting that Nazis were green) he tries to link green ecology to tyranny. He points to environmentalists like Dave Foreman—founder of Earth First!—and groups like The Wildlands Project to conjure a green conspiracy that entails "perhaps the forced relocation of tens of millions of people." Ecology come of age is, for Chase, totalitarian to its Green core.

This is nonsense. In the Fall 1995 issue of *Wild Earth,* the official publication of the Wildlands Project, publisher Dave Foreman called on Greens "to use libertarian ideas to protect biological diversity and wilderness." In the same issue, Wendell Berry made an impassioned plea to safeguard private property as the bulwark of conservation. Such subtleties are lost in Chase's tirade against ecology.

The Pacific timber war was never about biocentrism. It was about an epic struggle to control a common resource. Greens won in the Pacific timber war because they rode the wave of urban values sweeping the Northwest. An emergent majority claimed the towering forests that had fed, clothed, housed, and employed a tiny speck of the American population for the better part of a century. Greens merely played the game mastered by loggers for decades: manipulation of the massive powers of the federal government.

Chase concludes *In A Dark Wood* as if he understands this. In the final three pages he assails government ownership of "a third of the real estate in America," and the "numbing uniformity" it promotes. Chase should have heeded his own warning; he should have made *In A Dark Wood* a celebration of landscape diversity, and welcomed the break from half a century of federal, monocultural forestry.

Karl Hess, Jr., is an environmental writer affiliated with the Cato Institute and the Foundation for Research on Economics and the Environment.



PARADISE LOST

By Rabbi Mayer Schiller

The Lost City: Discovering the Virtues of Community in the Chicago of the 1950s
By Alan Ehrenhalt, Basic Books, 310 pages, $24

This book tells the haunting story of a happy and enchanted land, safe and secure, full of faith and character, of meaning and consolation, whose very existence seems mythical to those who never lived there. Some who did live there have come to doubt whether it was quite as marvelous as their memories tell them. *The Lost City,* Alan Ehrenhalt's moving portrait of 1950s Chicago, reminds us that many of our sweet memories of that very different era are true, and in the process challenges many of the imposed beliefs of our time.

"Millions of Americans now reaching middle age," observes Ehrenhalt, currently "mourn for something of" the 1950s. They yearn for the "loyalties and lasting relationships that characterized those days." Their longing is essentially for "a sense of community that they believe existed during their childhoods and does not exist now."

The Lost City does not issue a uniform endorsement of the '50s. Its author tends to accept popular dogmas on everything from "sexism" and "homophobia" to racial egalitarianism and Vatican II. It is the basically liberal cast of Ehrenhalt's mind which makes this book so painful to read. He realizes that "every dream we have about re-creating community in the absence of authority will turn out to be a pipe dream in the end." He exhorts the "generation that launched the rebellion" to "recognize that privacy, individuality, and choice are not free goods and the society that places no restrictions on them pays a high price for that decision." Yet in the end one searches his book in vain for ideas of how we are to restore the vibrant local parish in the post-Vatican II Church, how discipline is to be enforced in schools and homes without the old-time methods of which Ehrenhalt consistently disproves; how we are to have a "majority culture strong enough" to teach children behavioral standards when that culture is undefended.

We can only feel sorry for Ehrenhalt and his "millions" of middle-aged Americans. For the simple truth they find impossible to admit is that the slide into the abyss they rightly worry over cannot be halted unless one is pledged to a robust, Orthodox version of Catholicism, Protestantism or Judaism or, at the very least, to a firm vision of our European culture and its traditional standards.

The safe, efficient, livable Chicago of the 1950s will not be restored by Republicans peddling "balanced budgets" or De-

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mocrats chattering about "building diverse community." The restoration of our civilization—whose byproducts of stability, safety, loyalty, and meaning Ehrenhalt so desires—will only be achieved by leaders who understand the depth of our decadence and attack its roots.

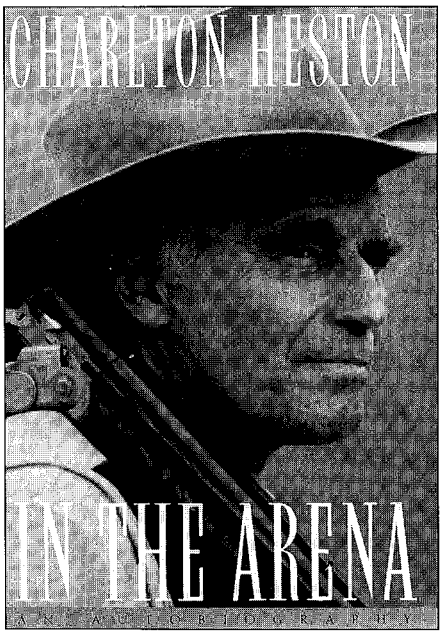
When Americans accept every aspect of the decadence that envelopes us, from informality in dress and disrespect for all authority to the sinlessness of homosexual acts and the secular nakedness of the public square, the battle is lost. Defenders of tradition have never developed a world view capable of standing firm against protracted "progressive" assaults. One explanation may be the negativism of traditionalist rhetoric. Ehrenhalt presents the defenders of norms in 1950s Chicago as primarily interested in discouraging evil. A more joyous advocacy of the blessings of faith, honor, and decency for instance, Catholics spreading the glad tidings of Chesterton or von Hildebrand might have been more enduring.

In truth, the Lost City was never entirely lost. It still exists among those who keep it alive as individuals, families or communities. Ehrenhalt is clearly wrong when he writes, "What is past is past."

There still are churches and schools similar to those of his youth. They are no longer in the mainstream, but their doors, and lessons, remain open to all. There are still individuals and families and neighborhoods who refuse to accept the ugliness and evil of "modern" culture, speech, dress, and entertainment. Their souls are nurtured by the standards and creations of previous generations. They have maintained their links to the *pietas* and *gravitas* of their ancestors.

Will such institutions and individuals ever possess the numbers and leaders necessary to rescue their nation? To that question only God knows the answer. Meanwhile, what we can do is join their ranks. If we are to be led off the main stage of history, let us do so with flags unfurled and trumpets blaring, forever loyal citizens of the Lost City.

Rabbi Mayer Schiller teaches Talmud at Yeshiva University High School for Boys in New York City.



CHARLTON HESTON, REAL PERSON

By Nick Gillespie

In the Arena
By Charlton Heston, Simon & Schuster, 592 pages, $27.50

When Charlton Heston slips off his mortal coil, the American landscape will lose a distinguishing landmark. In his own way, the Academy Award-winning actor (he got it for *Ben-Hur*) is as iconic as Mt. Rushmore or the Statue of Liberty. He may also be the last of the old-style movie stars.

As sketched in his new autobiography, *In the Arena,* Heston's life story sounds like something cooked up by a Hollywood publicity agent. His famous profile, for instance, is the result of his nose being broken playing high school football. Born into obscurity and poverty in northern Michigan in 1923, Heston managed to win a scholarship to Northwestern University's School of Speech, where he met his wife of 50-plus years, Lydia. Following service in World War II, Heston and his wife struck out for Broadway, where he eventually lied his way into an audition and got his big break in a production of *Antony and Cleopatra.*

Heston's initial encounter with Cecil B. DeMille, the director who would make him a star with such movies as *The Greatest Show on Earth* and *The Ten Commandments,* is legendary. As Heston tells it, he was driving out of the Paramount lot after losing the lead in what would have been his second movie when he saw DeMille, who waved at him. Heston waved back and DeMille, taken by the gesture, eventually cast him in *The Greatest Show on Earth,* which went on to win the Best Picture Oscar of 1952.

With half a century of acting and over 70 films under his belt, Heston has many tales to tell. His experiences with live TV make for good reading, as do his accounts of well-known directors, truculent costars, and the difficulties of location shooting. The book is filled with great moments, such as his ruminations on Edward G. Robinson's death scene in *Soylent Green* (only days later, the ailing Robinson actually did die), and his exposure of Steven Spielberg as a secret gun owner.

Heston's prose—written "entirely by himself" boasts his publisher—is as lively as the best Hollywood banter, even as it occasionally goes over the top. To make a living acting, Heston writes at one point, "you need the guts of a burglar and skin thick enough to turn cold steel, or at least the cold eye of a casting director." Recalling the grueling schedule of summer stock, he notes, "It was hell, but it was heaven for a kid with acting ants in his pants."

Like all stars, Heston exudes self-assurance, and he is willing to undercut his own pretentiousness. In recent movies like *True Lies* and *Wayne's World II* he has proven comfortable enough with his screen persona to deftly lampoon it. That same streak of self-deprecation surfaces in *In the Arena,* and it helps make the story wonderful to read.

But what animates the book—and elevates it above most star autobiographies—is Heston's clear engagement with the world around him. His devotion to his family, to his craft, to his causes, is really quite touching. From the descriptions of his children and grandchildren, to critiques of his leading roles, to defenses of his involvement with the civil rights and gun rights movements, Heston comes across as a man who, though sure of himself, is not overly full of himself.

Remembering an afternoon spent at the Emperor Hadrian's Roman villa, Heston writes, "Never having played Hadrian, I'm afraid I'm not enormously well-read on him, but it occurs to me he

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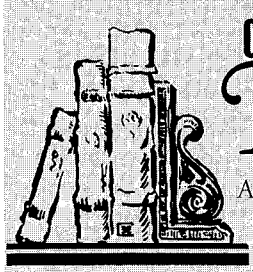
was like Michelangelo... and Jefferson and Richelieu and several other great men I *have* played, in that he was lonely. It might well be true that such men are usually separate men, cut off a little from the rest of us by their capacities and perceptions." In moments like these, it's as if Moses has come down from the mountain—or the screen—and revealed himself to be a regular guy, with all the strengths and weaknesses that entails.

Nick Gillespie is a senior editor of Reason.



Off The Shelf

A REGULAR REVIEW OF CLASSIC, OVER-LOOKED, NEWLY RELEVANT OR OTHERWISE DESERVING OLDER BOOKS

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

By Nancy Pearcey

Rationalism in Politics
By Michael Oakeshott, Liberty Press, 1991, 556 pages, $21

"It was the soccer ball and the Bible that worked." That's Kathy Dudley's explanation for how she and her husband established Voice of Hope, a community development program in Dallas. "We would go to a street, gather up all the kids, take them to a playground and play ball," Dudley says. "Then we would tell them Bible stories." Today the program has mushroomed into a $700,000-per-year endeavor providing tutoring, job training, housing rehabilitation, a dental clinic, and a thrift store—all privately funded.

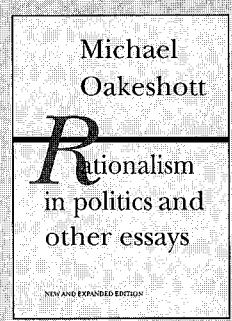
What makes private organizations like Voice of Hope flourish? That is an urgent question in a time when liberals and conservatives agree that Great Society programs aren't working. The idea that resources for national renewal must be found mostly *outside* the political arena is catching fire.

In this climate, Michael Oakeshott's classic *Rationalism in Politics* gains renewed relevance. Oakeshott argues that a society's political life should grow organically out of its morals, manners, traditions, and institutions—the arenas where civic virtues are practiced and transformed into ingrained habits of character. But modern politics has succumbed to what Oakeshott terms rationalism: the doctrine that to acquire genuine knowledge we must first wipe the mind clean of all received traditions, and opinions. Rationalism aims for abstract principles that are universally applicable, without regard for local structures or sensibilities.

The rationalist disposition infects virtually all modern political thought, Oakeshott says. On the Left, Marxism is a prime example of armchair theory imposed upon existing societies. On the Right, thinkers like Eric Voegelin, Leo Strauss, and Ludwig von Mises likewise expounded elegant ideas with little relation to real, historically formed societies.

The appeal of rationalism, Oakeshott writes, is that it reduces politics to technical formulas that can be "learned by heart, repeated by rote, and applied mechanically." It gives a shortcut to political knowledge, a crib sheet for novices. But it should not displace the richer knowledge gained only by experience. Pure rationalism is akin to reading books on piano technique instead of practicing the instrument, memorizing recipes instead of baking cakes, or debating the rules of baseball instead of playing ball.

Rationalism can even have a "disintegrating effect" on citizenship, Oakeshott warns, by suggesting that it is "more important to have an intellectually defensible moral ideology than a ready habit of moral behavior." To illustrate: Wade Horn of the National Fatherhood Initiative says he's often congratulated for helping make fatherlessness a key issue in social policy today. "You've won that debate," friends tell him, "what's your next issue?" Horn



replies, sometimes with exasperation, that the point is not winning debates but actually helping men become responsible fathers and citizens, and that work is far from complete.

Defending a tradition is much easier than restoring one. Oakeshott's *Rationalism in Politics* calls us to cultivate those "habits of moral behavior" that undergird civil society. It challenges us to forge a coherent unity between principles and practice.

Where Oakeshott's philosophy falls short is its refusal to recognize any transcendent moral truths. As Bruce Frohnen notes, Oakeshott gives his reader no reason "*why* he should follow tradition" instead of selfish whims. Even religion is no source of ultimate truths for him. This may explain why Oakeshott eventually grew pessimistic about society's ability to encourage norms of behavior, and in later writings appealed increasingly to a central state to regulate civic life.

Even with its weaknesses, Oakeshott's critique of rationalism could be a tonic for a nation weary of ideological battles and eager for solutions proven in practice. One barrier to solving social problems, Oakeshott teaches, is the rationalist temper of mind: it leads us to overemphasize theorizing and winning debates, and to underappreciate the task of loving our neighbor. It's time to take out the soccer balls and the Bibles, and create alternatives to government that really work.

Nancy Pearcey is fellow and policy director of the Wilberforce Forum, a Washington, D.C.-area educational organization.

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Author, Author!

BY FLORENCE KING

The Woman in the Index

Exactly one year ago, this column examined the phenomenon of the "literary handmaiden" —the professional helper who finds meaning in life by "inspiring" writers and artists. We called her "the girl in the footnote." Now let's look at her cousin "the woman in the index," whom we'll call the Muse.

Whereas the handmaiden is slim and high-strung, the Muse is zaftig and soulful. The handmaiden who proofreads her lover's manuscript is too awed to change a word, but the Muse thinks nothing of rewriting whole passages, especially if the work is a novel containing a character based on her. What she really wants is coauthorship but she will settle for interpretation. She alone knows what her genius really meant to say, and when she eventually writes a self-serving memoir she promotes herself from footnote to index.

The Western world's most ubiquitous Muse was Lou Salomé, who runs like a trout line through biographies of Friedrich Nietzsche, Paul Ree, Rainer Maria Rilke, and Sigmund Freud. She was born Louise von Salomé in St. Petersburg in 1861. Her father was a member of the czar's privy council and an undersecretary of state, positions that brought him a Russian peerage and gave Lou, his eldest daughter, the title "Excellency" plus a pension that saw her through years of chic vagabondage.

Self-exiled in Germany as an official blithe spirit, Lou took up with the philosopher Paul Ree, who introduced her to Nietzsche. She was ready to inspire him, but unfortunately her visa was about to run out. What to do? Countries that revere High Culture get stuck with women like Lou more than pragmatic wastelands like America. In Germany at this time, you could get an indefinite visa if you were writing a book, so Lou wrote one. Cobbled together from fragmentary sketches of her adolescence, it was called *Struggling for God.*

In her memoir, *Looking Back,* Lou writes that Nietzsche used Ree as his Miles Standish to propose marriage, but she claims she turned him down. The three remained friends for a time, until Nietzsche wrote some letters "that defamed me in ways which seem to me inexplicable." They must have, because she doesn't explain.

She married Friedrich Carl Andreas, a professor at the Institute of Oriental Studies in Berlin. Her extramarital lovers included an exiled Russian anarchist who could "pull nails from the wall with his teeth," but her great love was the poet Rilke, who settled into a *ménage à trois* with her and Andreas in their country cottage.

Like most men who were attracted to Lou, Rilke had bad nerves. She made him big pots of borscht, nursed him through his anxiety attacks, helped him look for his inner vision, and accompanied him on philosophical walks, "studying every approaching peasant in the eager and exaggerated hope of finding in him a combination of simplicity and profundity."

Rilke hated his mother and said that every time he saw her, "it's like a relapse." Upset by this statement, probably because it was clear and to the point, the windy Lou tells us what he really meant:

> No matter how deeply personal this appears, it should not be taken in an *absolutely* personal sense, for the meaning of his judgment emerges precisely from the power of his exaggeration. He locates what he wishes to rid himself of in a supra-personal, almost mythical realm.

In 1912 Lou was analyzed by Freud, who told her that Russians made the easiest analysands thanks to their "simplicity of soul." That was enough to convince her that she alone was qualified to explain what Freud really meant:

> The most mechanized Outwardness involuntarily finds its way back to a home in our most infinite Inwardness, where for the first time the words of Heraclitus about the infinite borders of the soul become fully true.

Amazingly, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Freud all praised Lou's intellect. They were probably trying to justify the time they spent with her to get themselves off posterity's hook. The latest English-language edition of her memoir requires three Afterwords to explain what Lou really meant:

> She was neither talking directly about nor trying to clarify her inner and (opposing) image of "grandeur" —which, for her, is imbedded in materiality…this spontaneous reference is actually an attempt to define the word "gruesome" fully by opposing it to an equally sublime concept.

Lou Salomé died in 1937, around the same time that another Muse was getting ready to march into literary history to the incessant tooting of her own horn. Sheilah Graham, the Hollywood gossip columnist who carved out a second career as the self-described inspiration of F. Scott Fitzgerald, mined the Muse lode like no one else before or since. No genius ever expired in Lou's arms, but Fitzgerald did drop dead on Graham's floor. This provided her with three books, two movies, storage space for her literary papers at Princeton University, and enough indexing to make "Graham, Sheilah" a household name.

Lou Salomé would have been jealous.

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the Digest

SUMMARIES OF IMPORTANT NEW RESEARCH FROM THE NATION'S UNIVERSITIES, THINK TANKS AND INVESTIGATIVE PUBLICATIONS

POLITICS

The Republicans Strike Back

Alfred J. Tuchfarber, Stephen E. Bennett, Andrew E. Smith, and Eric W. Rademacher, "The Republican Tidal Wave of 1994: Testing Hypotheses About Realignment, Restructuring, and Rebellion," in PS: Political Science and Politics *(December 1995), American Political Science Association, 1527 New Hampshire Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.*

The rearrangement of the American political landscape resulting from the 1994 congressional elections may last beyond one election. The authors, all affiliated with the University of Cincinnati, suggest that "America is indeed in a historic period of party realignment" that could result in a shift of power as dramatic as after the 1932 election.

Some political analysts claim that the Republican triumph in 1994 resulted from traditional Democratic constituencies staying home from the polls or because of "angry white males." But National Election Studies data showed that many Democratic groups voted in their usual proportions. Forty-eight percent of African Americans, for example, voted in 1994, ensuring that blacks continue to vote about 80 percent as often as whites. Women voted 94 percent as often as men, and a majority of women voted for Republicans in congressional races. The 20 percent of Americans with the lowest incomes voted 53 percent as often as the 20 percent of Americans who earned the most money.

The 1994 elections continued to mark a shift in ideology. While the percentage of Americans who say they are Republican has increased only slightly in recent years, the percentage who say they are conservative has grown substantially. In 1972, for example, 32 percent of Americans told Gallup they were liberal, 33 percent said they were "middle of the road," and 27 percent said they were conservative. By 1995, only 17 percent of Americans told Gallup they were liberals, compared to 44 percent who said they were moderate and 33 percent who said they were conservative. Since conservatives vote for Republicans 80 percent of the time, this ideological shift favors the GOP.

Demography also favors the Republicans, since the typical Democrat is a senior citizen whose political views were forged during the New Deal, while the typical Republican is a baby buster who came of age during the Reagan era. The rising lack of confidence in government also supports the GOP. In an August 1995 *New York Times*/CBS News poll, 66 percent of Americans agreed that "the government is doing too many things better left to businesses and individuals." While it's still possible that Americans could abandon both major parties, the authors conclude that it's more likely that "a new period of Republican dominance" has begun.

Idealism is Convenient

Joseph Lepgold and Timothy McKeown, "Is American Foreign Policy Exceptional? An Empirical Analysis," in Political Science Quarterly *(Fall 1995), Academy of Political Science, 475 Riverside Drive #1274, New York, New York 10115.*

Ever since President George Washington warned against the dangers of entangling foreign alliances, it's been accepted wisdom that the United States is an idealistic nation with a special mission to regenerate the world in its own image. Lepgold, a professor in Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service, and McKeown, a political scientist at the University of North Carolina, disagree. American leaders may use idealistic rhetoric to advance their foreign policy goals, but they have pursued policies in accordance with those of other nations.

The authors examined a large database called the "Correlates of War," which tabulates national military expenditures between 1816 and 1985. Between 1871 and 1914, the United States, far from being isolationist, was more likely to match another nation's increases in military spending. And while, between the two world wars, the U.S. had only two alliances with other countries (compared to the USSR's 30 pacts and Italy's 23), America's aloofness, far from being unique, was comparable to other island nations, such as Japan, that faced no threat of invasion by land and therefore had no need to form defensive alliances with other countries.

American foreign policy seems so idealistic, the authors argue, because American leaders invoke American ideals to advance their foreign policy goals. "Americans," they write, "typically do not grasp the politics, history, and social forces out of which foreign policy is made elsewhere," and presidents find it easier to advocate traditional American ideals than to explain the complex realities of international relations.

ECONOMICS

Don't Fear the Speculator

Pam Woodall, "The World Economy: Who's in the Driving Seat?" in The Economist *(October 7, 1995), 25 St. James Street, London SW1 1HG, England.*

In recent years, the world's finance ministers have blamed failed economic policies on a new foe: international bond dealers, whose speculations in global currencies al-

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legedly cause more harm than good. Woodall, economics editor of *The Economist,* finds this argument overstated. "The appropriate attitude to the global capital market," she writes, "is neither blind devotion nor white-knuckle fear, but healthy respect."

An international market in capital is not a recent innovation. In 1920, for example, Moody's rated bonds issued by over 50 nations. But when the world's financial ministers assembled the Bretton Woods agreement in 1944, they clamped down on the flow of capital for fear of creating another worldwide depression. By 1985, only 15 countries were selling their bonds in the United States. Not until the 1980s, when many nations had ended exchange controls on currency, did the international financial market begin to boom. But those nations—France, Italy, Spain, Portugal—that did not abolish exchange controls until the early 1990s have found the notion of freely flowing capital scary.

In 1973 the amount of foreign currency traded daily was between $10 billion and $20 billion. By 1983 the sum had risen to $60 billion, and by 1992 these daily trades had risen to $900 billion. The huge foreign currency market has helped improve the world economy in several ways, Woodall notes. The market has easily enabled investors in wealthy countries to invest capital that aids developing nations. And freely flowing investment proves a potent check on the ability of nations to raise taxes, since investors can easily move their wealth from high-tax nations to their less-taxed rivals.

Efforts to slow capital flows by such measures as imposing taxes on currency transactions or re-establishing exchange controls will do more harm than good, according to Woodall. The easiest way for a nation to deal with the global capital market, she argues, is to produce balanced budgets and not get into debt. National leaders who incur the wrath of the markets through reckless spending and high deficits may be voted out of office by angry voters who are watching their savings erode. "Capital markets, driven by the decisions of millions of investors and borrowers, are highly 'democratic,'" she writes. "They increase politicians' accountability by making voters more aware of governments' economic performance."

Why Trade Creates Wealth

Robert C. Feenstra and Gordon H. Hanson, Foreign Investment, Outsourcing, and Relative Wages, *National Bureau of Economic Research, 1050 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138.*

Most economists agree that the wages of America's skilled workers have risen steadily over the past two decades. Some argue that the increase is due to computers, with the wages of the computer-literate rising substantially. But Feenstra, an economist at the University of California (Davis), and Hanson, an economist at the University of Texas, argue that international trade helps ensure that the wages of skilled workers grow. Up to a third of this wage growth, they argue, may be due to international trade. Feenstra and Hanson looked at Census Bureau data for 435 U.S. industries between 1979 and 1987. They found that, for every one percent increase in these firms' imports, the wages of workers who didn't toil on the assembly line rose by between 0.1 and 0.2 percent. The authors attribute much of this gain to companies' ability to contract out operations to lower-wage countries. Nike, for example, employs only 2,500 people in the United States, but 75,000 people in other countries work for subcontractors making Nike products. Each time Nike or another shoe manufacturer gives business to a foreign subcontractor, the salaries of people who design and market shoes increase faster than the wages of people who make shoes.

The benefits from this trade also aid other countries. Feenstra and Hanson look at Mexico, where the Mexican government, after that nation's 1982 financial crisis, encouraged foreign investment, particularly among the *maquiladora* plants on the U.S.-Mexican border. Foreign direct investment in Mexico increased from 1.4 percent of that nation's economy in 1983 to 9.7 percent by 1989. The result: jobs in assembly plants rose by 15.9 percent each year. But while there were plenty of jobs for unskilled workers, wages for skilled workers rose even more. In 1984, the average Mexican skilled worker earned 1.9 times as much as his unskilled counterpart; by 1990, skilled Mexicans were making 2.5 times as much as unskilled ones.

International trade, Feenstra and Hanson conclude, does not simply produce better goods at lower prices, it also increases skilled U.S. workers' prosperity.

Is the FDA a Health-Hazard?

Robert Higgs, ed., Hazardous to Our Health? FDA Regulation of Health Care Products, *Independent Institute, 134 98th Avenue, Oakland, California 94603.*

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is supposed to protect the health of Americans by ensuring that unsafe foods and drugs do not reach the marketplace. But the authors of *Hazardous to Our Health* suggest that the FDA's regulation of medicine might do more harm than good.

Emory University economist Paul Rubin examines the effects of drug advertising. According to the Physicians' Health Safety Group, middle-aged men who take a low-dose aspirin every day can reduce their risk of heart attack by 50 percent. Bayer produces an aspirin for this purpose, but since the FDA has not approved the use of aspirin for heart attack prevention, Bayer cannot state on the label what its "adult low-strength enteric aspirin" is to be used for. Should Bayer advertise its aspirin as a heart attack preventative, or send scientific articles to physicians showing the benefits of aspirin, the FDA could mandate that Bayer pay very large fines.

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The FDA even prohibited Bayer from producing low-strength aspirin in a blister pack, claiming this pill separation was an illegal form of advertising.

The FDA, Rubin argues, "invariably places a much greater weight on any potential harm from a pharmaceutical than on any benefits from the product." As a result, the FDA's efforts to reduce risk ensure that consumers are denied valuable information. For example, prescription drugs are only allowed to be advertised if a "brief summary of prescribing information" is included. But this not-very-brief summary doubles the cost of print advertising and effectively prevents most prescription medicines from being advertised on television, preventing consumers whose primary source of information is TV from learning about new medicines.

Rubin suggests that regulation of drug advertising be restored to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), which had this regulatory control until 1962. Because the FTC has less ability to coerce companies, Rubin argues, it would "not regulate in as arbitrary and capricious a manner as does the FDA."

Independent Institute research director Higgs proposes restricting the FDA's ability to control medical devices. Every time one of these devices causes problems, the user of the device is supposed to report the problem to the FDA, or face a fine of up to $1,000,000. But the FDA has never determined when a "medical device report" (MDR) is supposed to be filed, ensuring that much of the time the agency gets reports from people who haven't used a device properly or when a machine breaks down. But these MDRs have proved highly useful for trial lawyers looking for somebody to sue or consumer reporters anxious to discover purportedly dangerous products.

In 1992, for example, the FDA used MDRs as the basis for ordering Eli Lilly subsidiary Physio-Control to close its defibrillator plants for two years, charging that the device was associated with (but did not necessarily cause) 630 deaths between 1985 and 1991. But Physio-Control's 100,000 defibrillators were each used about 10 times each year during this period, ensuring that Eli Lilly lost $170 million for a product that worked at least 99.99 percent of the time. In 1993, Pfizer subsidiary Infusaid was fined $290,000 by the FDA for marketing an altered drug infusion pump without the agency's permission, even though Infusaid changed the pump after recalling over 3,900 pumps because of 10 consumer complaints. In other words, Infusaid was punished for repairing a product that worked 99.75 percent of the time.

Such examples, Higgs warns, are typical of the FDA's "costly and unsettling regulations" that discourage innovation that might "make available products of great benefit." Is it right, he asks, for the FDA to deny consumers products that might improve their health in order to protect against the slightest possible risk?

Industrial Policy Fails Again

Andrew Dick, Industrial Policy and Semiconductors: Missing the Target, *AEI Press, 1150 17th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.*

Some economists, like Clinton adviser Laura Tyson, believe that the visible hand of government can revive the semiconductor industry. But Dick, an economist at the University of California (Los Angeles), believes arguments for high-tech protectionism are as fallacious as the ones that previous planners used to prop up heavy industry.

Supporters of semiconductor subsidies use several arguments. They claim that semiconductors are a "strategic" industry vital to national defense. In fact, the U.S. military only buys one-tenth of one percent of world semiconductor production and could easily protect its supply by giving generous long-term contracts to the few firms able to supply the Pentagon with chips that withstand variable temperatures and radiation. Industrial policy advocates also claim that semiconductor jobs are vital ones that need to be preserved, even though U.S. semiconductor firms only employ 175,000 people who could easily find work in the booming computer industry should a semiconductor firm fail.

Both the U.S. and Japan have manipulated the semiconductor industry heavily. In 1986, the U.S. and Japan entered an agreement that set a minimum price for Japanese chips sold in the United States. The result: U.S. buyers were forced to pay $500-600 million more each year for computers, and the profits of Japanese chip makers rose by $3-4 billion annually. The price support for Japanese chips failed to help U.S. manufacturers because most of them had decided to abandon the chip market before the support was implemented.

A second U.S. government effort to aid semiconductor manufacturers came with the creation of Sematech in 1987. A partnership between some semiconductor companies and the federal government, Sematech funds research to make American computer manufacturers more productive.

Federal government spending on Sematech is $100 million annually, and Dick believes the state has received a poor return on its investment. "Sematech," he notes, "has failed to raise research spending of semiconductor firms, their productivity, or their profitability." The firm abandoned research early and now largely acts as a conduit for giving subsidies to computer equipment manufacturers. But because Sematech "has not been subject to the market discipline faced by private industry," it has often artificially prolonged the life of failing enterprises, two of which are GCA (a division of General Signal) and Silicon Valley Group Lithography.

The best way for the U.S. to support the semiconductor market, Dick argues, is not through industrial policy but through free trade. "Agreements among policy makers to rely more on private market forces," he writes, "and less on government edict, offer the best insurance against future trade and policy wars."

SOCIETY

It Shouldn't be a Federal Crime

Edwin Meese III and Rhett DeHart, "How Washington Subverts Your Local Sheriff," in Policy Review *(January/February 1996), Heritage Foundation, 214 Massachusetts Avenue N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002.*

National politicians have tried to show they are "tough on crime" by turning lots of offenses from state crimes to federal ones. Today there are more than 3,000 federal offenses—from serious crimes like cop-killing or drive-by shootings to more

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trivial matters, such as filing a phony weather report or writing a check for less than a dollar.

Meese, a Heritage Foundation fellow, and DeHart, Meese's special counsel, argue that the centralization of law enforcement power is a terrible idea. "While crime is a major problem affecting the entire nation," they write, "both constitutional tradition and practical experience demonstrate that it is most effectively fought at the state and local level."

The Framers of the Constitution, Meese and DeHart contend, "clearly intended the states to bear responsibility for public safety." Even Alexander Hamilton, a champion of a strong national government, warned in *Federalist* 17 that the "one transcendent advantage" states had over the federal government was "the ordinary administration of criminal and civil justice." Throughout our history, prominent law enforcement officials have shared Hamilton's skepticism. J. Edgar Hoover, for example, opposed the idea of a national police force, and he resisted efforts to federalize crimes previously under state jurisdiction.

The expansion of federal police power, say Meese and DeHart, has several disadvantages. It may violate constitutional prohibitions against double jeopardy, since defendants (like the police officers accused of beating Rodney King) can be acquitted of a state charge and then convicted of a near-identical federal offense. Federal law enforcement is also more expensive; each new federal judgeship annually costs the taxpayers more than $1 million, and clerks to federal judges can earn as much as $100,000 a year, more than many state supreme court judges make. And federal cops are far more likely to use unnecessary force than their state or local counterparts. Would Idaho police have spent $10 million hunting down Randy Weaver? Would the Waco sheriff's department have brought in tanks and nerve gas against David Koresh?

Federal crimes, according to Meese and DeHart, should be limited to interstate or international crimes and offenses against the federal government, such as counterfeiting or treason. Most other crimes, they believe, should be handled by state and local police. They agree with New York state senator Stephen Saland, who says that "crime is best fought at the local level, with local police who know the community, [and] with local judges who reflect the standards of the community."

Welfare Reform Failures

Douglas J. Besharov and Karen N. Gardiner, "Paternalism and Welfare Reform," in The Public Interest *(Winter 1996), 1112 16th Street N.W., #530, Washington, D.C. 20036.*

Many welfare analysts argue that if America's welfare problem is ever going to be solved, millions of young, unwed mothers will have to be persuaded to get jobs and not have additional babies. Can any welfare rules be written to ensure that these mothers follow this path? Besharov and Gardiner of the American Enterprise Institute examine three federally funded demonstration projects that may provide important clues about efforts to alter teenage behavior.

Each of the three demonstrations used different incentives in an effort to change the unwed mothers' behavior. Manpower Development Research Corporation's New Chance project provided welfare mothers aged 16 to 22 with education and job-training classes. Mathematica Policy Research's Teen Parent Demonstration program mandated that teenage welfare recipients enter its classes or face a reduction in benefits. Abt Associates's Comprehensive Child Development Program continues to operate; it not only gives classes to parents, but also gives additional educational resources to their children as a way of trying to stop these children from being as poor as their parents.

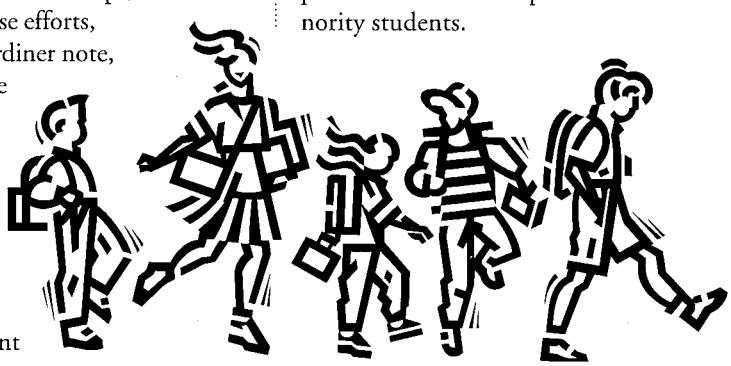
These programs cost about $10,000 per person per year in addition to what the federal government was already providing in welfare, food stamps, and Medicaid. Yet these efforts, Besharov and Gardiner note, didn't help welfare recipients get off the dole. After 18 months, 82 percent of the New Chance mothers were still on welfare, compared to 81 percent of a control group that didn't receive special services. Nor did the educational benefits provided help much. While three-quarters of the New Chance participants received their GEDs, the average participant still read at an eighth-grade level. There was also no effect on these women's pregnancy rates. The women in the Teen Parent Demonstration project and New Chance were required to take a family planning class, but within two years half of them had become pregnant, a rate equal to control groups that didn't take the classes.

These demonstrations, Besharov and Gardiner argue, show that there are limits to the ability of "paternalistic welfare policies to eradicate dependency." At best, such "tough love" policies might prevent matters from getting worse. But they believe it will take a very long time for government regulations "to build habits of responsible behavior among long-term recipients" of welfare.

School Desegregation Myths

David J. Armor, Forced Justice: School Desegregation and the Law, *Oxford University Press, 198 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10016.*

The effort to desegregate American public schools was one of the most bitter and protracted battles in U.S. educational history. Many of the court cases that generated the desegregation effort remained unresolved for decades or even generations. School desegregation is also quite costly; a plan can increase the costs of education by as much as 25 percent. But Armor, a professor at George Mason University's Institute of Public Policy, argues that the massive effort at school desegregation has had no appreciable impact on the academic performance of minority students.



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Advocates of school desegregation take as a given the "harm and benefit thesis," which argues that segregated schools harm African-American children's self-esteem while integrated schools make black children feel better about themselves. "Negro children suffer serious harm when their education takes places in schools which are racially segregated," a 1967 report from the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights observed, "whatever the source of such segregation may be."

But the evidence that integration in and of itself improves African-American academic achievement is weak. As early as 1966, a team of researchers led by James S. Coleman found that black children performed better in integrated schools than segregated ones. The difference, however, was due not to the racial composition of the schools, but to the fact that black children attending integrated schools came from richer and better-educated families than those who sent their children to segregated schools.

The most comprehensive analysis of school desegregation and student achievement was undertaken by the National Institute of Education in 1984, whose experts concluded from an analysis of 19 studies that school desegregation increased African-American reading achievement slightly and had no effect on math scores. Interestingly, five of the eight studies that showed substantial *declines* in African American students' reading abilities came from cities with comprehensive mandatory desegregation plans.

Additional evidence from the National Association for Educational Progress (NAEP) shows that African-American students are doing substantially better in school over the past quarter-century. In 1971, black 13-year-olds scored an average of 39 points lower than whites on standard reading tests; by 1990, they were only scoring 20 points lower. In math, 13-year-old blacks scored 49 points less than whites on NAEP tests, but by 1990 they were only scoring 20 points lower. (White student achievement remained relatively constant during this period.)

But African-American students in majority-black schools, the NAEP found, advanced as much as their counterparts did in majority-white schools. Since black student achievement has risen as quickly in inner cities as in suburbs, Armor argues that "school desegregation is unlikely to have contributed significantly to national black achievement gains." It's far more likely, he contends, that rising black family incomes and better-educated parents have had more to do with the increase than desegregation.

If desegregation should be pursued, Armor argues, the worst way to achieve desegregated schools is through mandatory busing plans. In 1992, the American Institute of Research collected data on school desegregation in 300 districts and found that districts that had no formal school desegregation plan tended to be more integrated than areas where such plans were instituted, because they tend to retain more white students.

School desegregation plans, Armor adds, should be as voluntary as possible. He supports a program of "equity choice," where parents or students could receive vouchers to attend a school of their choosing in city or suburb. Inner-city districts would also receive subsidies to create magnet schools that would attract suburban white students. Schools would give preference to incoming students whose entrance would improve the school's racial balance. Such a plan, he concludes, "should generally promote desegregation in a metropolitan area while providing opportunities for choice."

OTHER COUNTRIES

The Decline of Kenya

Smith Hempstone, "Kenya: A Tarnished Jewel," in The National Interest *(Winter 1995/96), 1112 16th Street , N.W., #540, Washington, D.C. 20036.*

When Kenya became independent in 1963, its future appeared bright. Its climate was surprisingly pleasant for an equatorial country, and its plains teemed with wildlife. Its economy, the third largest on the African continent, was relatively productive, and the nation was one of the few places in Africa where whites, blacks, and Indians lived in peace.

Today Kenya is becoming an increasingly inhospitable place, with shrinking foreign investment, falling tourism, rising animosity between tribes, and democracy an unlikely prospect. What went wrong? Hempstone, an author and ambassador to Kenya during the Bush Administration, charges Kenya's longtime president, Daniel arap Moi, for accelerating his nation's decline.

Since independence, Kenya has only had two presidents. The first, Jomo Kenyatta, ruled from 1963 to 1978 and was a relatively benign "pro-Western capitalist" who enjoyed the support of a majority of Kenya's tribes. But while Kenyatta was a member of the Kikuyu, Kenya's biggest tribe, his successor, Moi, belongs to the Tugen, "one of Kenya's smallest and most disadvantaged" ethnic groups. To secure his position, Moi instituted a massive bribery program. Soon such routine matters as obtaining a driver's license or even getting a bedpan in a hospital had to be accompanied by a bribe. After the Kenyan air force failed to oust Moi in 1982, the president responded by declaring his nation a "*de jure* one-party state" and banning all parties other than the ruling Kenya African National Union (KANU).

In 1990, some of Moi's opponents organized the Forum for the Restoration of Democracy (FORD) and called for multiparty elections. Moi's response was to throw most of FORD's leaders in jail. But in 1991, ten leading donor nations, along with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, suspended $350 million in aid. Moi then allowed elections, but his police harassed opponents, blocking them from organizing and even declaring some areas "KANU zones" where other parties were barred from campaigning.

The results of the 1992 elections gave KANU a narrow victory, though Hempstone believes Moi would have lost an honest election. Since then Moi has become more tyrannical; half of the 88 opposition members of Kenya's parliament have been thrown in jail on one pretext or another, and opposition publications have been banned.

Hempstone argues that while only Kenyans can determine their nation's fate, the U.S. could help by suspending its aid (currently $29 million a year) and recalling ambassador Aurelia Brazeal. "America can only be true to itself," he contends, "when

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it opposes repression and stands up for decency and democracy."

Welfare Hurts Europe's Farmers

D. Gale Johnson, Less Than Meets the Eye: The Modest Impact of CAP Reform, *Centre for Policy Studies, 52 Rochester Row, London SW1P 1JU, England.*

A major stumbling block in the way of global free trade is the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), a program of massive farm subsidies. At their height in the 1986-88 period, these subsidies ensured that Europe's farmers received prices for their crops 90 percent above world levels. And because Europe's farmers annually produced one percent more crops than European consumers needed, the result was massive "wine lakes," "butter mountains," and other surpluses that, over 25 years, amounted to as much as one-fifth of annual European food production.

In 1992 the EU revised the CAP and declared that price supports for cereals and livestock would end and be replaced with direct grants to farmers. The union also declared that CAP subsidies would eventually fall by 20 percent from their 1986-88 peak. But Johnson, an emeritus professor at the University of Chicago, predicts that these changes will have little effect on Europe's farmers. By 2000, he foresees, the CAP will continue to provide large subsidies to farmers, but fail to check the steady decline in farm employment.

Much of the funds spent under the CAP do not benefit farmers directly. CAP funds are allocated to companies that supply goods and services to farmers, or to the bureaucrats that administer the program and set quotas. After all these suppliers and administrators take their share of the subsidies, Johnson calculates that only 11 percent of the European farmer's net income comes from government subsidies: "Thus the CAP has been and is a very costly means for achieving a very modest increase in net farm family incomes."

Nor has the CAP checked the continuing decline in European farm employment. Between 1960 and 1990, the number of people employed in agriculture in the European Union has fallen by 3.5 percent each year, with the declines steepest in Germany (with a 4.3 percent annual drop) and Italy (a fall of 4.1 percent). Farm subsidies may well have played a role in this decline because stable, subsidized prices gave farmers easier access to credit, which they used to buy land to create large farms that need fewer workers than smaller ones.

The CAP, Johnson concludes, will not stop the decline of Europe's farms; there will be fewer farmers and farms in Europe over the next decade. "As enormously costly as the CAP has been for consumers and taxpayers," he writes, "the benefits that it has conferred in farmers have been modest, indeed."

We welcome submissions of reports, articles, or papers you think should be summarized in THE DIGEST. Please send to P.O. Box 8093, Silver Spring, MD 20907.

SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENT

Puffing About Tobacco

W. Kip Viscusi, "Secondhand Smoke: Facts and Fantasy," in Regulation *(No. 3, 1995), Cato Institute, 1000 Massachusetts Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001.*

In recent years many Americans have become increasingly worried about the dangers of secondhand smoke. Government agencies have also targeted smokers for regulation. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) charges that secondhand smoke is responsible for 2,200 cancer deaths and about 9,000 to 18,000 heart disease deaths each year. According to the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA), roughly 150 and 700 workers die each year from tobacco smoke they involuntarily inhaled on the job. Both agencies want to restrict smokers' rights substantially.

Viscusi, a Duke University economist, argues that both the EPA and OSHA estimates of secondhand smoke deaths are the products of faulty science. The EPA reached its conclusions about lung cancer deaths based on a review of 11 studies, only one of which reached a statistically significant correlation between secondhand smoke inhalation and lung cancer. Their heart disease estimate was derived from a single study, which ignored all factors responsible for heart disease except for secondhand smoke. OSHA used the same 11 studies as the EPA, but from them it calculated a lifetime risk of getting lung cancer due to secondhand smoke of between one in 10,000 and four in 10,000—about the same risk as the two in 10,000 possibility of getting lung cancer from drinking chlorinated water.

Secondhand smoke also seems so fearsome, Viscusi argues, because most Americans believe smoking is more dangerous than it actually is. The average American believes that 43 percent of smokers get lung cancer, yet the U.S. Surgeon General says that between five and ten percent of smokers contract cancer. Americans believe that 54 percent of smokers die from tobacco-related diseases, yet in reality between 18 and 36 percent die from their habit.

Viscusi contends that in addition to providing accurate information about risk, federal regulators should also be more accurate about the costs to business of restricting secondhand smoke. OSHA, for example, claims that firms would only have to pay between zero and $86 million to implement its proposed secondhand smoke regulations—an assertion based on the dubious assumption that every American business has 150 square feet of surplus office space it can freely convert into a smokers' lounge. Business and labor, Viscusi concludes, are better able to judge how to regulate secondhand smoke than government bureaucrats. The market does a better job than government in "reflecting the competing costs and benefits of restricting smoking."

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Opinion Pulse

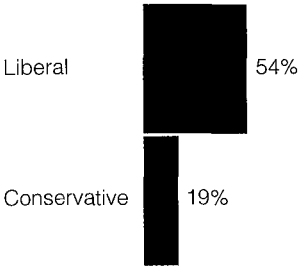
EDITED BY KARLYN BOWMAN

THE POLITICAL VIEWS OF JOURNALISTS

Special surveys of the ideological inclinations of journalists are conducted infrequently. Below we reproduce findings from the three major studies currently available. They show that self-identified liberals outnumber conservatives in newsrooms. Among the general public, on the other hand, conservatives usually outnumber liberals by about two to one. In 1995, for instance, 39 percent of the public called themselves conservatives and 19 percent liberals, according to the Times Mirror Center.

Question: **Do you consider yourself liberal or conservative?**

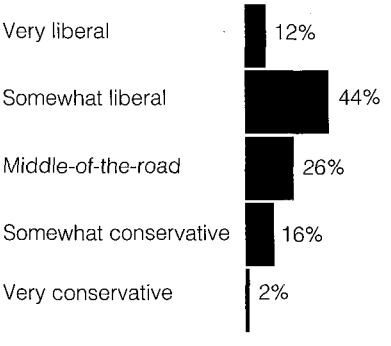
Response from journalists at major media outlets, 1980



Note: Sample = 240 journalists at major media outlets.
Source: Survey by S. Robert Lichter and Stanley Rothman for the Research Institute on International Change at Columbia, 1979 and 1980.

Question: **How would you describe your views on most matters having to do with politics?**

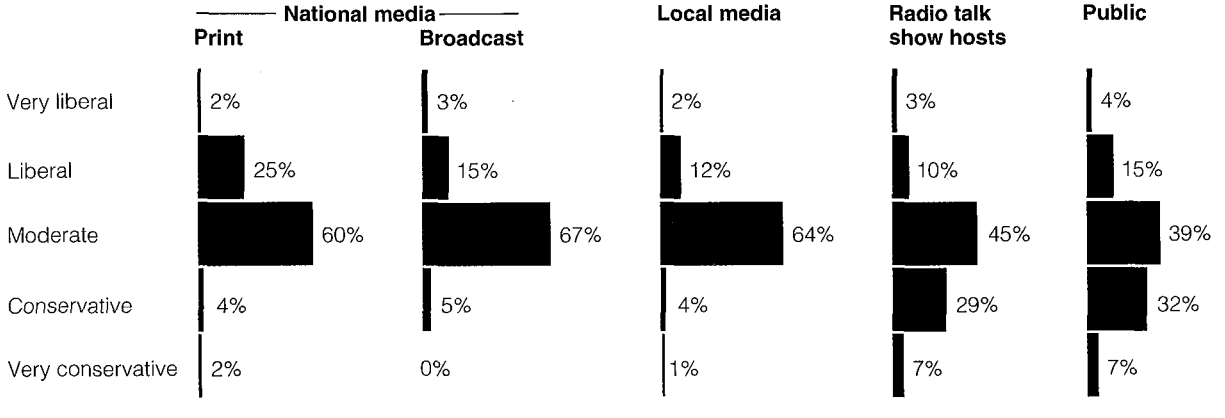
Response from print journalists, 1985



Note: Sample = 2,703 news and editorial staff members at 621 papers mentioned in a national survey.
Source: Survey by the *Los Angeles Times*, February 23–28, 1985.

Question: **How would you describe your political thinking? Would you say you are...?**

1995 responses by media



Note: Sample = 248 members of the national media (28 at the executive level, 83 at executive producer or managing editor level, and 137 at the correspondent or reporter level) and 267 members of the local media (115 at top management levels and 115 at the correspondent or reporter level). Thirty-one hosts of talk radio shows were interviewed.
Source: Survey by the Times Mirror Center for The People & The Press, March 8–30, 1995 for the press sample and September 1994 for the national public sample.

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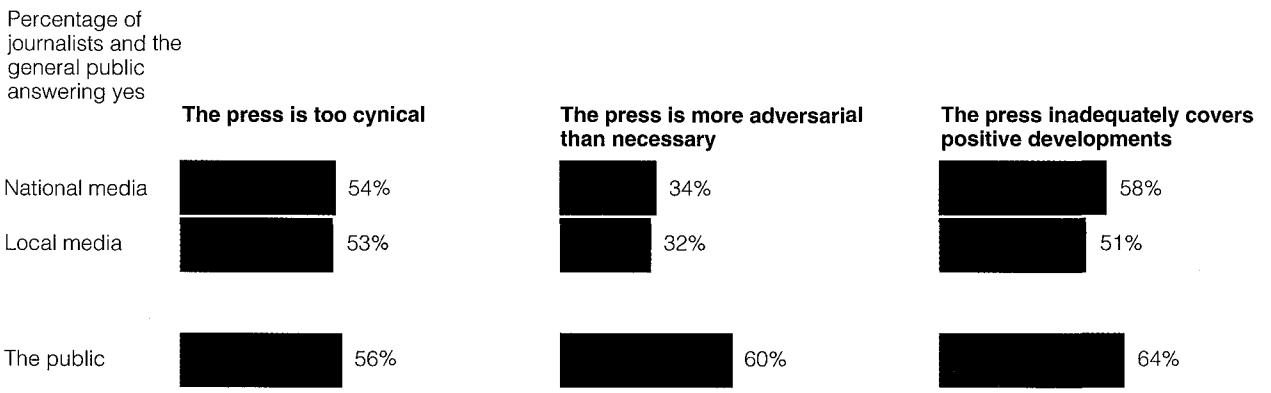
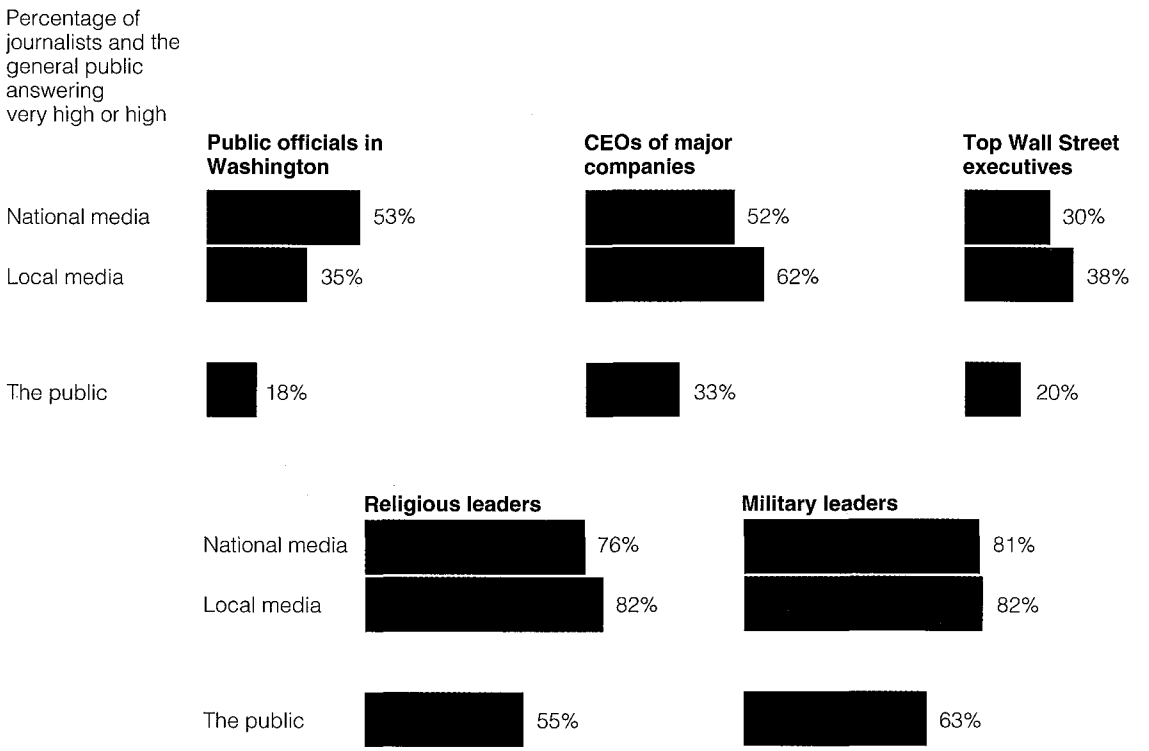
Media Criticisms

A majority of reporters accept the idea that the press is too cynical and that it doesn't adequately cover good news. The public agrees. Sixty percent of the public also believe the press is more adversarial than necessary, but only about a third of the media agree. Perhaps surprisingly, when asked to evaluate the honesty and ethical standards of various professions, the press gives public officials in Washington, CEOs of major companies, Wall Street executives, religious leaders, and military leaders higher marks than does the public.

Question: **First, some critics charge that... Overall, do you think this is a valid criticism of the news media, or not?**



Question: **Generally, how would you rate the honesty and ethical standards of...? Would you give them a very high rating, a high rating, a low rating, or a very low rating for honesty and ethical standards?**



Source: Survey by the Times Mirror Center for The People & The Press, March 8–30, 1995 for the press sample and March 22-26, 1995 for the public sample.

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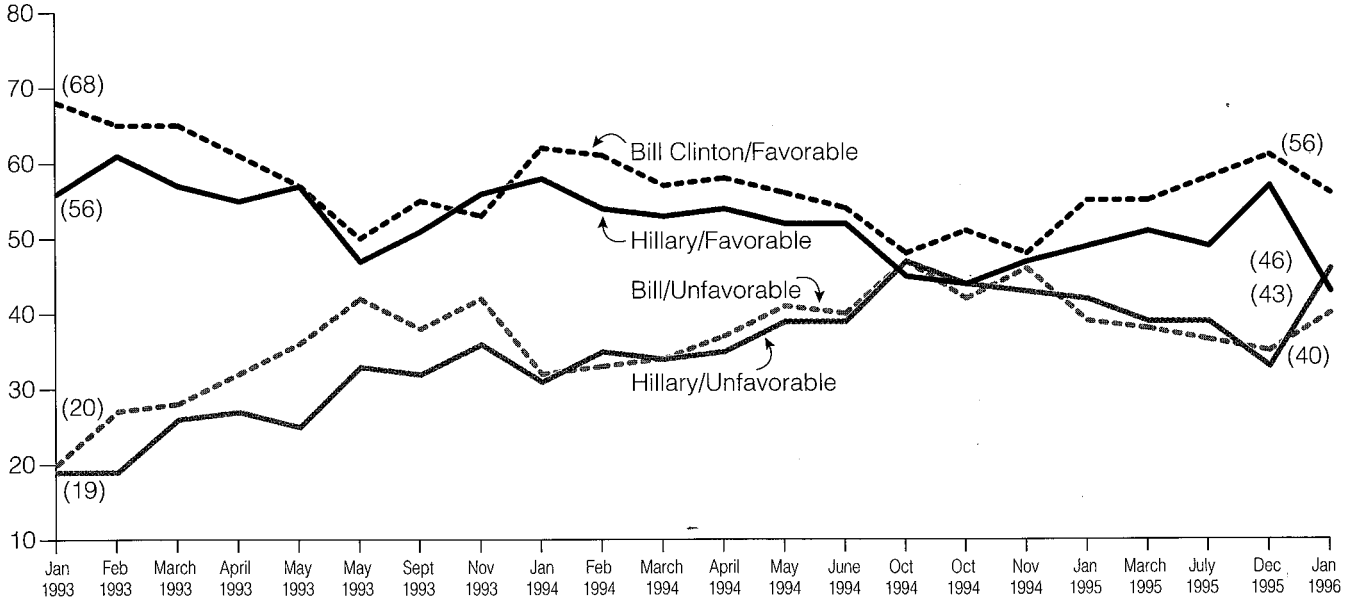
HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

Over the last three years, the number of people having an unfavorable impression of the First Lady has doubled. Mrs. Clinton's ratings have generally paralleled those of President Clinton. In recent weeks, however, her favorable numbers have dropped sharply while his have not. A majority also say that her influence on the Clinton administration has been generally negative, a change from polls in 1994. The number saying that she is less ethical than most politicians has jumped, too.

Question: **Please tell me whether you have generally favorable or generally unfavorable impressions of Bill Clinton/Hillary Clinton**

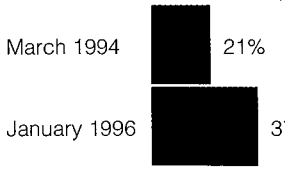


Source: Survey by Yankelovich Partners for *Time* and CNN, latest that of January 10–11, 1996.

Question: **From what you know, do you think...?**

Hillary Rodham Clinton is more ethical than most politicians

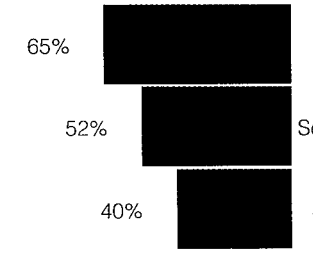
Less ethical



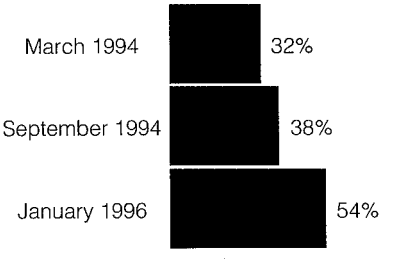
Source: Survey by Yankelovich Partners for *Time* and CNN, latest that of January 10–11, 1996

Question: **Do you think...?**

Hillary Clinton's influence has been generally positive on the Clinton administration



Generally negative



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization for CNN and *USA TODAY*, latest that of January 12–15, 1996.

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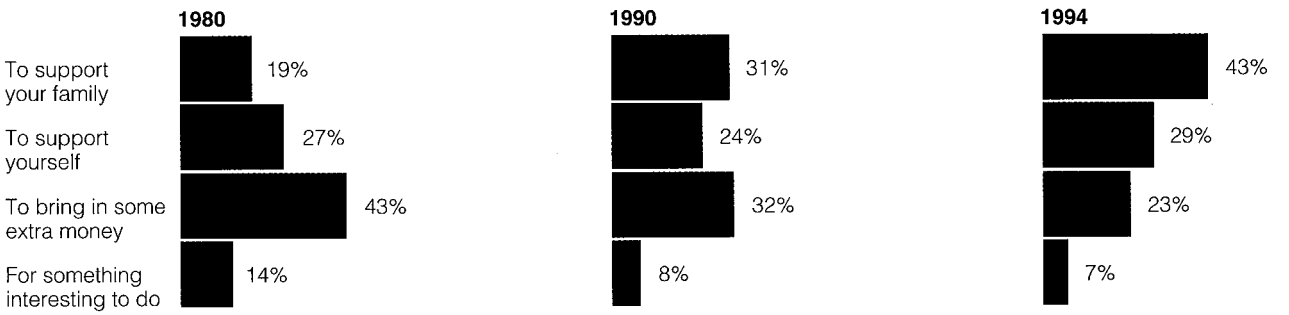
WOMEN AND WORK

In seven surveys over the past 25 years, Virginia Slims has probed women's attitudes on a wide variety of personal and political issues. In 1980, the largest number of employed women told the pollsters they were working to bring in some extra money. Today, the largest number of women say that they are working to help support their families, something only 19 percent said in 1980. When asked what they would do if they were free to stay home or work, however, women split. Forty-seven percent say they would prefer to stay home, and 46 percent report they would prefer to have a job.

Question: **Are you working primarily to support yourself, to support your family, to bring in some extra money, or for something interesting to do?**

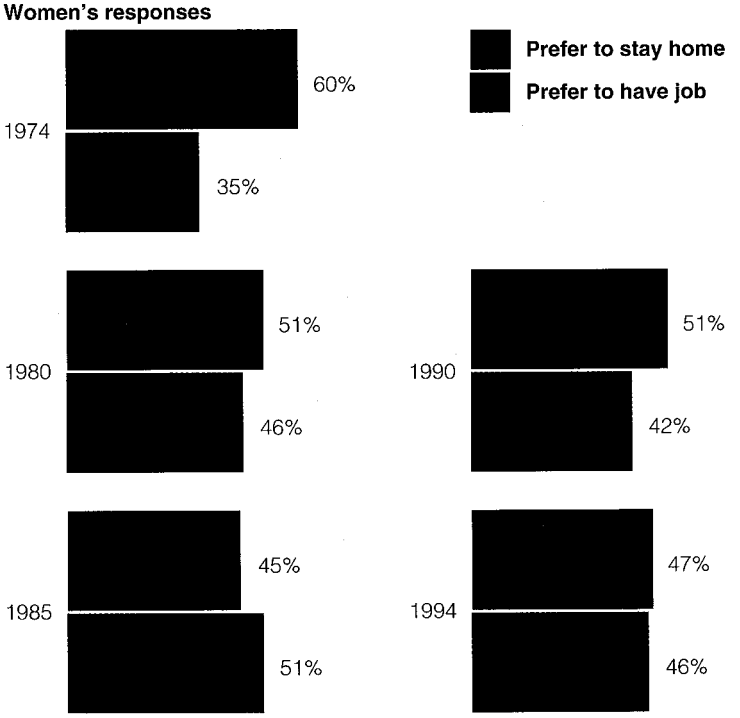
Responses of employed women

Working primarily...



Question: **Now, if you were free to do either, would you prefer to have a job outside the home, or would you prefer to stay home and take care of a house and family?**

Women's responses



Responses of different groups of women in 1994

	Prefer to stay home	Prefer to have a job
Single	28%	63%
Married	53	41
White	48	45
Black	40	53
Employed full-time	34	60
Employed part-time	41	50
Not employed	60	30
Employed with children	43	51
Not employed with children	61	33

Source: Survey by Roper Starch Worldwide for Virginia Slims, latest that of November 7 through December 20, 1994..

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Special Correspondence:

Glenn Loury Replies to Karl Zinsmeister

Karl Zinsmeister's January/February BIRD'S EYE *column critiqued Glenn Loury's recent arguments on race in America. Below, we provide Loury with the last word.*

My short essay in the last issue of *The American Enterprise,* "What's Wrong with the Right," criticized the way some conservative intellectuals have come to discuss the race question. In effect, I accused people like Dinesh D'Souza, David Frum, and Charles Murray of being racial essentialists. I argued that these and other conservatives have made more than is warranted of the differences so readily observable between blacks and other groups of Americans—differences, for example, in the extent of various social pathologies, or in the average economic and academic success. I did not deny the existence of such racial differences, nor did I minimize the importance of the behavioral problems that afflict inner-city communities and hinder the security and prosperity of their poor black residents.

I did urge, however, that despite these important racial differences in behavior, conservatives who aspire to lead America into a new century should reject the temptation to view black Americans as persons apart from, and a threat to, our civilization. Conservatives should strive instead to see blacks as inseparably interwoven constituents of the larger social fabric—that is, as persons enmeshed in a common social and political milieu, not fundamentally different from other Americans. I grounded my argument in both political and moral considerations.

As a black American and a conservative, I take no pleasure in making this argument. I am not one who "plays the race card" comfortably. But events of the last two years have brought me to the sincere belief that such criticism is appropriate and necessary. Apparently, my little bit of apostasy has caused discomfort in some conservative quarters. The question has arisen: "Whose side is he on?" In my experience, the adherents of ascendant political movements do not take criticism well, particularly when that criticism reinforces the themes of their political enemies. Unfortunately, to criticize conservatives on the race question is unavoidably to reinforce the increasingly desperate efforts of liberals to sustain their political influence. Though this is not my intent, it is a price I am willing to pay if I can succeed in encouraging conservative intellectuals to reflect on the way they are framing America's discourse on racial issues. Far from breaking ranks, I believe I am doing "the movement" a service by urging such reflection.

Karl Zinsmeister, the editor of this magazine, concurrently published a vigorous rebuttal of my essay ("Painful but Productive: Toward Honesty on Race"). As far as I can tell, he does not see any problem with the way conservatives are dealing with race questions. Despite his polite suggestion that he agrees with the majority of what I wrote, my impression is that our differences are rather fundamental. I welcome this opportunity to respond, briefly, to Karl's rebuttal. There are two fundamental questions at issue: is my concern about the substance and tone of some recent conservative writing on the race question justified? And, is my vision of a transracial political sensibility—that is, my urging that conservatives adhere to the color-blind ideal—a coherent and practical vision? As I understand him, Karl's answer to both of these questions is a resounding, "No."

Of course, I cannot properly defend here my broad characterization of *The End of Racism* (by Dinesh D'Souza), and *The Bell Curve* (by Charles Murray) as, at least in part, works of racial essentialism. (I have published more extended reviews of these works elsewhere.) I will note, though, that D'Souza says black social pathology represents a revival of barbarism in the middle of Western civilization, and he questions whether minority groups are entitled to a presumption of moral equality with whites. And Murray has argued that black intellectual inferiority, while a fact, is really no big deal, since cognitive ability is not the only currency for measuring human worth. He has publicly expressed his conservative multiculturalist's vision of the American people divided into "clans"—various ethnic or racial groups that impute superiority to themselves by virtue of their possessing some desirable trait to a greater degree than the other "clans." Black Americans may not be very smart, on the average, but they are great athletes and can take pride in that, Murray suggests. The quotation from David Frum in my original essay only stated what was a widely expressed view among conservative critics of Jack Kemp—that the former Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development had "gone native," because Kemp believed that even poor blacks in public housing projects would respond with effort on their own behalf if given the right opportunity.

Perhaps D'Souza really is, as Zinsmeister asserts, the Pat Moynihan of our day—fearlessly shouting unpleasant truths about black culture from the bell tower, in a desperate effort to help blacks by bringing some realism and candor to the public discussion of social problems. Alternatively, perhaps he is an opportunistic polemicist prepared to demonize an ethnic group with sensational language and grossly generalized characterizations so as to sell books and further his career. Unfortunately, Zinsmeister chooses not to defend *The End of Racism* or *The Bell Curve* directly; he simply rejects my con-

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cerns about their authors' motives.

In fact, neither he nor I can know anything about these writers' motives. But what of the effects of their writings? Do they encourage ugly, racist sentiments in the population at large? Zinsmeister does not say. He never addresses my implicit claim that these works, in effect if not in author's intent, have needlessly contributed to the public denigration of black people. Instead, he reports that Charles Murray was once a Peace Corps volunteer; it must then follow that Murray "cares" as deeply about the plight of the inner-city poor as any of us. Pardon me if I have my doubts about this. Zinsmeister hears no evil and sees no evil; he finds no contempt, no disdain, no rage, and no self-righteous hypocrisy detectable in the harsh judgments that these and other conservative writers have handed down of late about the moral, intellectual, and civic worth of black Americans. Again, excuse me if I harbor a different perception.

Zinsmeister even engages in some demonization of his own. He writes of this "depraved, disloyal, responsibility-free underclass culture" from which "decent citizens of all races" have fled in the interest of self-preservation. (Disloyal?) Of course these "decent citizens" care about the plight of the underclass, he continues. How dare anyone suggest otherwise? It is just that no external solutions exist for the problems; these maladies are self-imposed cultural artifacts: "The troubling reality in our ghettos these days is that the hellish torments are being inflicted by their own residents. If only some identifiable outside force were creating the siege conditions, nearly any American would gladly swing a battle axe against such an enemy. But the harder, more tragic reality is that inner-city Americans are being brutalized by their own neighbors, their own reproductive partners, their own teenagers, their own mothers even. And, ultimately, by themselves. Who is forcing the crack pipe between those many lips?"

Zinsmeister, in these mind-numbing sentences, clearly illustrates my view of "what's wrong on the Right." His "us-them" racial dichotomy is so instinctual, and is embraced so unreflectively, that he seems oblivious to it. Let me offer a hypothetical argument analogous to Zinsmeister's so that the reader may consider whether such a line of argumentation is compelling: "AIDS victims have brought their suffering on themselves; they are victimized by their own lovers, their own mothers even. Who prevents gay men from wearing condoms? Their insistence on engaging in unprotected anal sex endangers the rest of us." Exactly what moral relevance would this observation have when considering whether we should provide assistance to fellow citizens who are stricken with AIDS, or on the question of whether we should forego placing them in quarantine? Similarly, would it be valid to dismiss concern about an epidemic of teen suicide with the observation: "If only we could push a button and make it stop, but they're doing it to themselves? Of course we care, but what can we do?"

Obviously, our connection to the AIDS victim, or the teen at risk of suicide, is not contingent on any showing that the person in need is "like us." We presume that, in every way that is morally relevant, "they" and "we" are essentially the same. And we help them, to the extent that we are able and deem prudent, because that is what truly "decent" people must do. Why should not the same presumption obtain with respect to inner-city residents. (Will Zinsmeister entertain the possibility that the easy evocation of phrases like "the disloyal underclass," "ghetto pathology," and "black cultural deviance" makes it easier to forget that the people languishing in these hell holes are not "them," but "us"?)

In what morally relevant way is the 16-year-old black victim of a drive-by shooting "closer" to his black assailant than he is to a law-abiding white resident of a safe and prosperous section of his city? How are our obligations to protect innocent newborns in any way mitigated by the fact that it is a crack-addicted mother who threatens the child's life? (Pro-life advocates surely can see the point.) But Zinsmeister has already decided that "those people" in the inner-cities are not "us," and he wonders what "we" can do to help "them" if they are so bent on destroying themselves. Yet this differentiation between "us" and "them"—based partly on race, partly on social class, and partly on an ill-specified cultural distinction (what, exactly, is "underclass culture" and where does it diverge from "American culture"?)—is morally superficial in the extreme. Why should not a black conservative, upon hearing such argumentation, recoil in the horrifying recognition that his fellow "hard-nosed realist conservatives" are viewing the social landscape through a racially distorted lens?

So, I stand by my assertion that there is a problem with the way many conservative intellectuals view racial problems; that there is more than a hint of racial essentialism on the Right; and that it would be healthy for "the movement" to engage in some constructive self-criticism on this issue. But what of my insistence that a "color-blind" view is an appropriate and necessary principle to guide American public affairs. Zinsmeister agrees with this view for governments—affirmative action is problematic, racially gerrymandered voting districts must go. But he says that color-blind thinking is "fruitless idealism" when applied beyond the sphere of state action. He rejects my claim that behavioral pathology is at bottom a "problem of sin not of skin." If so, he asks, then why are so many blacks "sinning" so vigorously? In his brave new world of racial candor, Zinsmeister even feels entitled to compare the extent to which various ethnic groups have fallen short of the glory of God.

Astonishingly, his argument here consists of nothing more than a litany of black-on-white violations, ranging from his own unfortunate experiences to the outrages of O.J. Simpson, the idiocies of black Cornell University law students, and the predations of Los Angeles street rioters. How, he asks, can a white be expected to be "color-blind" when one's prospects of survival in any city in the land depend upon one paying careful attention to the color of the teenagers approaching on a dark street? Moreover, Zinsmeister informs us that he personally has often tried to be "color-blind" toward blacks, only to be met with rejection by people who refused his offers of friendship, or did him worse offenses, purely because of the color of his skin.

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I shall resist the temptation to respond in kind, with an equally long list of personal and public events that illustrate how some whites are unremittingly hostile to blacks. However tempting it may be, such tit-for-tat is beside the point. What, I wonder, is Zinsmeister's exhibition of self-righteous anger supposed to prove—that at this late date in America it is fruitless and idealistic to preach the moral imperative of racial transcendence? To the contrary, the greater the problems of racial prejudice and bigotry, the more important it is to uphold the truth that we Americans should judge each other by the content of our respective characters, and not by the color of our skin. The more popular become the racial demagogues—black or white—the more essential it is for decent people to hew to our universalist principles. If we start looking for excuses to give up on the idea of a racially unified America, where common national interests and shared loyalties trump our racial differences, then we shall find them trivially easy to produce.

Martin Luther King, Jr., led a movement of non-violent social change in the South among blacks who had plenty of reason to give up on the idea that whites would ever treat them with the decency and respect that, as fellow human beings entitled to full civil equality, they deserved. He taught that we should resist the temptation to hate our oppressor, even when our indignation was fully justified. He urged upon blacks—who were beaten, hosed, murdered, and set upon by dogs for no reason other than their determination to demand their God-given rights—that they should "turn the other cheek." He argued that it is easiest to be a Christian when all is going well, when one is comfortable, secure, and well fed, when one has no enemies and suffers no injustice, but that it is most important to exercise one's Christian discipleship when, because of unjust tribulation, the temptations to hatred and despair lie at every turn.

This is good advice for Zinsmeister, as well. If he truly believes that color-blindness is the right principle, then the time to adhere most steadfastly to it is now, when so many around us are abandoning its practice. If relatively rich and secure Americans like Glenn Loury and Karl Zinsmeister lapse into cant and self-pity in the face of today's racial outrages, what can we expect of those, black and white, who live so much closer to the social margin? Would not the supporters of David Duke or Louis Farrakhan be delighted to learn that black and white conservative policy elites are now fighting for the moral high ground of the racial victim?

I know that serious problems impede the realization of the color-blind ideal in American social life. But we must continue to seek it. I am fully aware of the greater extent of social pathology among blacks than whites or Asian Americans. (I have been writing candidly about "the enemy within" black society for many years now.) But we need not demonize a race of people, even as we give candid acknowledgement to these facts. (Moynihan never did this; D'Souza feels no such constraint.) I do not need to be reminded of the ground gained in many black precincts by the racist demagogues and preachers of hate. (I speak against them almost daily, and have had my life threatened as a result.) But the fact that these black racists hold more sway among the masses today is no reason to give encouragement to white racists, or to abandon the ideal of a non-racial American society. I am as conscious as anyone of the difficult problems posed by social decay in the inner-city. But I defy anyone to demonstrate that race *per se* is either the cause or the cure for these problems. (Charles Murray never used to think so.) No quick fixes for these problems will come from policy wonks, whether of the Left or the Right.

I have written that progress in the face of this great human tragedy will occur, if at all, only slowly as, one by one, individuals have their lives transformed from the inside out. But this intractability is no reason to consign the residents of ghetto America to some nether world. It does not justify the moral disengagement which I insist, Zinsmeister's denials to the contrary notwithstanding, is a key feature of the politics of our time. Why shouldn't the parentless children of these districts be adopted by Americans of all races in greater numbers? Why don't the ministries of suburban churches with wealthy congregations direct their missionary zeal toward these stricken communities to a greater extent than they now do? Why can't more single mothers struggling to raise their children decently get out of these awful neighborhoods and find housing which they can afford in safer, more stable, more integrated communities? And, most provocatively, why shouldn't our state and federal governments continue to seek ways, consistent with our principles, to provide public support for the uplift of these stricken communities? If conservatism can countenance the helping of farmers, the elderly, and the indigent in need of medical care, why should the very idea of endeavoring to help those trapped in these ghettos, through government programs funded with taxpayers' dollars, be so offensive to the conservative mind? It is neither fruitless nor hopelessly idealistic to urge, in the great tradition of American decency and fairness, that this be done.

Again, I caution conservatives against the sins of arrogance and self-righteousness. Having listened for so many years to liberal counter-arguments that began, "You don't really care about the poor," I fear that some conservatives have lost the ability to look self-critically at their own ranks, and to see callous indifference and racial insensitivity when these maladies rear their ugly heads. I have great respect for the contributions of many conservative social scientists mentioned in Zinsmeister's rebuttal; they are, some of them, my friends of many years. I consider myself to be "one of them." But I did not check my conscience at the door of the party. As long as "the movement" will have me, I intend to so advocate, both because it is the "right" thing to do, and because such advocacy is essential to my own sense of self-respect as a black, Christian American of conservative philosophical commitments.

Glenn Loury
Boston University

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the Mail

Having read with pleasure Florence King's prose puncture of John Kenneth Galbraith's reputation (Jan./Feb.), I thought that some attention should be paid to his maltributions to mainstream Sovietology. Professors like Galbraith fostered idiotic fictions about the Soviet Union almost to the bitter end, with the aim of salvaging socialism from deserved opprobrium.

In 1984, Galbraith wrote in the *New Yorker* that the Soviet economy was making "great material progress." His evidence: "One sees it in the appearance of solid well-being of the people on the streets, the close-to-murderous traffic, the incredible exfoliation of apartment houses." And what was the secret of such achievements? Said Galbraith: "Partly, the Russian system succeeds because, in contrast with the modern Western industrial economies, it makes full use of its manpower."

Arnold Beichman
Hoover Institution, Stanford

I am certain I learned *desuetude* from reading William F. Buckley. It is possible that he taught me *ineluctable,* too. Florence King seems to object to Galbraith's use of such words. (AUTHOR, AUTHOR!, Jan./Feb.) Galbraith's most recent book is not, as she says, *The Culture of Contentment* (1992), but *A Journey Through Economic Time* (1994), unless there's a later one I don't know about.

Buckley, Galbraith, and I remember a time when the word *principled* went with conservative. When did *snotty* become the operative adjective?

Thomas E. Blackburn
Haverhill, Florida

I found Michael Weiss and Karl Zinsmeister's "When Race Trumps in Court," (Jan./Feb.) both poignant and disturbing. As an Australian who greatly admires the American system of government, it disappoints me to hear of such obvious failings in its judicial branch. The concept of black jurists refusing to convict black criminals, not on any objective grounds but rather due to racial bias, is morally abhorrent. Those black jurists responsible for such decisions, and those members of the black community who believe such verdicts somehow counter past and present injustices against their race, will find that such dishonest attempts at achieving equality will only threaten advances in race relations, and possibly widen the gulf between blacks and whites.

Dean Bertram
Sydney, Australia

Bruce Bartlett's "How Poor are the Poor" (Jan./Feb.) draws some completely false conclusions. I presume that the U.S. Bureau of the Census was only surveying poor Americans who actually have roofs over their heads. Homeless people wouldn't have any of the items on the list. The survey also takes no account of cultural differences whatsoever. Microwaves, dishwashers, and clothes dryers are not very popular with Europeans, who prefer to air their laundry and find that microwaves cook tasteless food.

If America's poor are better off than the average person living in Western Europe, where is the East New York of Zurich? Or the South Bronx of Stockholm? Bartlett might find some of that in Tory Britain, still reeling from 15 years of Thatcherism, or in Italy or Spain. But take a nice trip to Western Europe and then visit places where America's poor people live. Your eyes might be opened a bit.

Anthony Skaggs
New York

TAE seems too good to be true—to find a magazine with so many voices, so much optimism, and so much honesty. As a "religious conservative" I've pretty much come to terms with being a social outcast, but it was nice to read your special issue (Nov./Dec.). It gave me some encouragement that, yes, there is some intellect behind the concern over the rampant nihilism and shallowness today.

Bob Sale
San Diego

I write in response to the faulty description of the Modern Language Association of America (SCAN, Jan./Feb.) The MLA's vision is a century old and includes all living languages, modern literature in all historical periods, a variety of theories and methods, and—as time passes—a growing number of authors and literary works. Individual MLA members pursue literary study in diverse ways, and the MLA welcomes both traditional and new approaches.

Phyllis Franklin,
Executive Director, MLA

[Editor's note: For a different perspective, see page 15.]

I found Karl Zinsmeister's "Pay Day, May Day," (Sept./Oct.) extremely helpful in forming a clear picture of what actually happened to wages and their buying power for individuals and families over the past twenty-five years. Its conclusions point out the uphill battle families with several children and one parent at home now face. I encourage you to run a follow-up article on the growth of government's tax burden over the past twenty-five years. Such research would be very useful to pol-

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icymakers who are increasingly aware that the well-being of the family is essential to the well-being of society as a whole.

Tom Prichard
The Minnesota Family Council

Though Martin Wooster appreciates some of the personal strengths of Russell Kirk and points them out in his review of *The Sword of Imagination* (Jan./Feb.), he also makes several questionable statements about this "flawed giant of American conservatism."

Contrary to Wooster's assertion, Kirk treated his adversaries with generosity. He avoided bringing up old quarrels with Frank Meyer and Willmore Kendall. And he refrained from criticizing the neoconservatives who had unfairly attacked him as an anti-Semite and whose vilifications had affected him and his family financially. This man, for whom I worked as an assistant for many years, did not bear grudges. Not mentioned by Wooster were Kirk's differences with paleoconservatives—Kirk was not a predictable champion of the paleoconservatives, and distanced himself as much from them as from other political activists.

W. Wesley McDonald
Elizabethtown College

Wooster remarks that Kirk, like his heroes, Henry Adams and Albert Jay Nock, wrote his memoirs in the third person. Nock did not write his memoirs in the third person. And while Kirk had respect for Nock's writings, his ardor cooled over the years so it is unlikely that Kirk would install Nock in his pantheon of heroes.

Robert M. Thornton
Fort Mitchell, Kentucky

Wooster seems shocked to find that Kirk's life was dedicated more to friends than financial pages or the political functionaries of his day. But this says more about Wooster than Kirk. Readers of *The Sword of Imagination* won't find the ruminations of a policy wonk or a stock market junkie. He was larger than that.

Morgan N. Knull
The Wabash Commentary

It's not true that "Kirk never understood or appreciated capitalism." His economics textbook, *Economics: Work and Prosperity* manifests emphatic appreciation for the free economy. He praised "the good that competition does," held that "the market tends to find its own remedies for monopoly," and lauded the market's colossal productive achievement.

John Attarian
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Martin Morse Wooster replies:
To understand the problems of our time, conservatives need to master four disciplines—philosophy, history, economics, and sociology. Russell Kirk was very well read in philosophy and history, but knew little of economics and less of the social sciences. Kirk wrote an introduction to economics—late in his career, and from an obscure publisher. But for most of his professional life, Kirk at best gave one half-hearted cheer for the free market.

As for Kirk's feuds, McDonald correctly observes that, with the notable exception of the 1964 Goldwater campaign, Kirk did not use his autobiography to settle scores with his antagonists. But Kirk certainly let his readers know who his enemies were. Kirk repeatedly denounced libertarians, for example, a habit that, if students I saw at Piety Hill were typical, he encouraged his disciples to adopt. Had Kirk transcended his prejudices, he might have discovered that a great many libertarians are as interested in Kirk as they are in Mises or Hayek.

Knull should know that I find Kirk's choice of friends admirable, not shocking. And Thornton is right; Nock's Memoirs of a Superfluous Man *was written in the first person.*

As your editor wrote in BIRD'S EYE (Nov./Dec.) the anti-religious minority seems to be at a fever pitch in America. As an American diplomat who has lived in two secular countries—Austria and Turkey—I can tell you a country without spirituality is a land without hope. Turkey is now in the process of rediscovering religion.

I applaud your efforts. Your editor will be our generation's William Buckley. If possible, I hope you will do an edition devoted to foreign policy and national security issues.

Hal V. Lackey III
American Embassy Ankara

Robert Fogel's assertion (Nov./Dec) that Islam is the "largest non-Christian religion in America, representing about 4 percent of the population" is highly questionable. Recent surveys have indicated American followers of Islam to be closer to 1 percent.

James Dobson draws a parallel between U.S. abortion policy and the Nazi holocaust. But abortion was illegal in Nazi Germany. Surely anti-abortion arguments can be made without comparing the opposition to mass murders, especially when the comparison is flawed.

John George
University of Central Oklahoma

Let me express my great appreciation for the Nov./Dec. edition. I will be participating in a conference on the press and religion for the National Press Foundation and plan to cite material from this issue and recommend it to all present. Thank you for a fair look at our community. What a refreshing viewpoint!

Robert P. Dugan, Jr.
National Association of Evangelicals

President Lee Teng-hui has perused the article entitled "The War on Taiwan," and other in-depth analyses contained in the November/December 1995 issue, and would like to congratulate you on the success of your magazine. Thank you for your sympathy with the cause of our country.

Frederic P. N. Chang
Office of the President of the Republic of China

I am one of those "cold, self-interested right-winger(s)" Karl Zinsmeister refers to in BIRD'S EYE (Nov./Dec.). I'll ask him to check his premises. We want the Government to "leave us alone" and we are self-interested precisely because we care deeply about the smallest of all minority groups, the individual. Taking a "hands off" approach and letting the human spirit soar is the best thing that should be done. Since our race problem "can only be won on the battlefield of each black person's soul," let the government leave them alone so that they may begin the fight.

Mark Henderson
Lakewood, CO

CORRECTION: In our Nov./Dec. issue, the final sentence in the extract from Washington's Farewell Address (page 80) is an error. That sentence does not appear in the speech.

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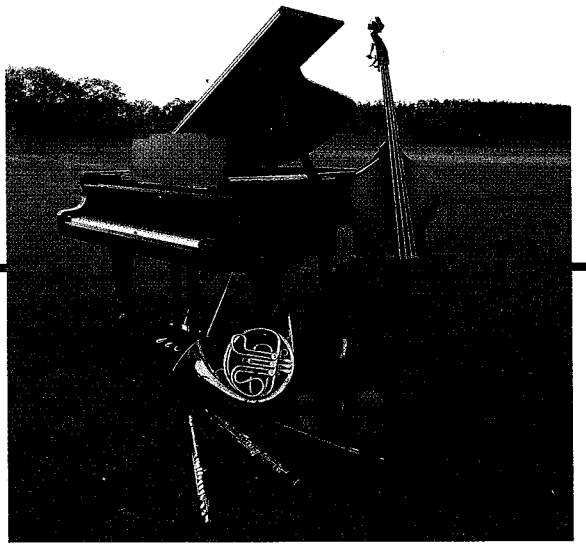

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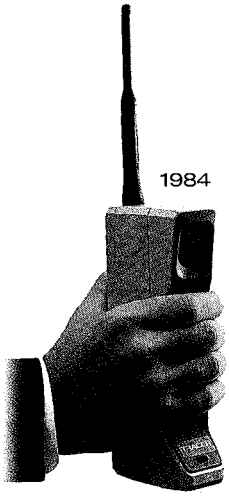

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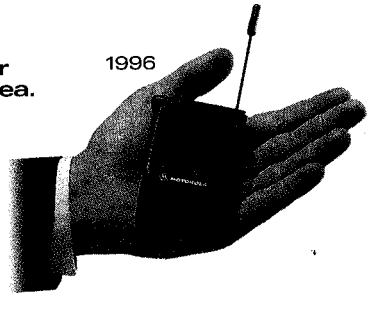

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